



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.

May - June 2009



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Vol. 14 Issue 3

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: **May 19th** **June 16th**

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:

May 26th **June 30th**

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. ©2009

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
Carmela Bergman	508/359-8902
Mitchell Greenblatt	508/881-2111
Judith Cherrington	508/473-4087

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.compassionatelfriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

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

Love Gifts

Mr. Robert Hudson in loving memory of his sister ***Beatrice Elizabeth Hudson***.

Mr. & Mrs. William H. Bardol in loving memory of their son ***William H. Bardol Jr.*** on his birthday March 7th.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. King in loving memory of their daughter ***Caren L. Firth***.

Mrs. Rina Washburn in loving memory of her son ***Kevin Washburn*** on his anniversary February 20th.

Mr. Arthur W. Robinson III and Mrs. Sharon A. Robinson in loving memory of their son ***Arthur W. "Billy" Robinson IV***.

Mrs. Janet R. Raneri in loving memory of her son ***Major Robert M. Raneri*** on his birthday May 5th and his anniversary June 26th.

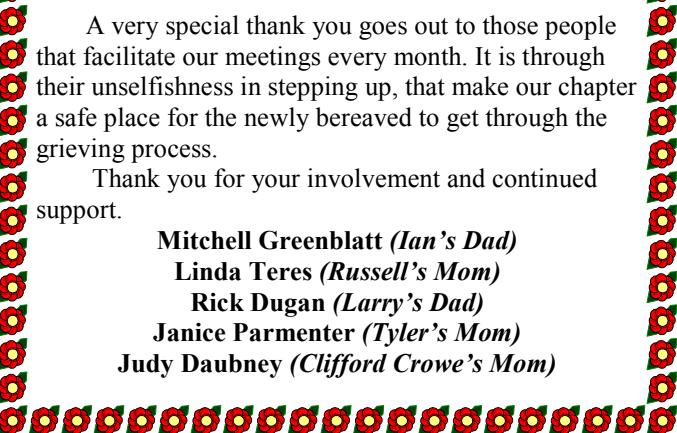
Mrs. Dorothy A. Cabral in loving memory of her daughter ***Cindy Cabral-Beaton*** on her birthday May 29th.



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 make 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)





The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest



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 May and June. 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

May

MICHAEL VINAY BHATIA
BEATRICE ELIZABETH HUDSON
DAVID JOSHUA FLEET
JOHANY NADEAU
GERRY LAPIERRE
LEA M. SIEBERT
JOSEPH A. McCLOY
WILLIAM J. COSTIGAN
ROBERT F. DUMONT JR.
DOLORES R. BERGERON

June

JOHN RYAN PIKE
DAVID PASQUANTONIO
AMY M. TOOMEY
MATTHEW PISAPIA
MICHAEL HEARNS
RICHARD G. CAPADAIS
NATHAN TRAVIS UNRUH
RUSSELL J. TERES
LAURIE SLOPEK
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
IAN GREENBLATT

Birthdays

May

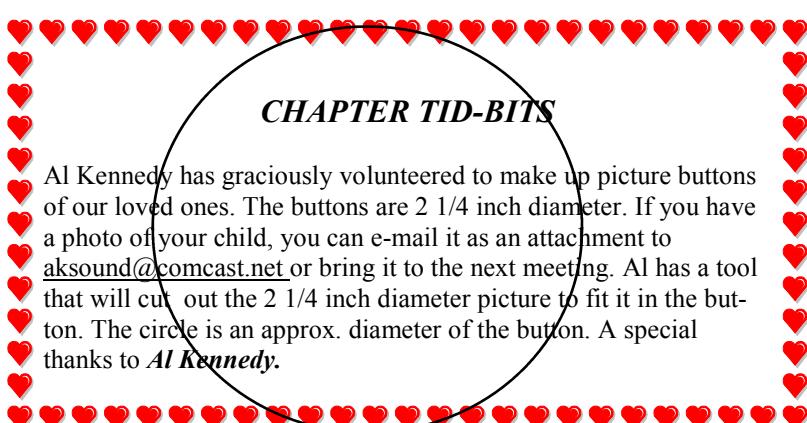
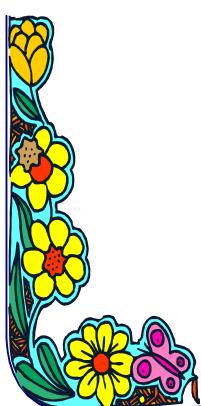
DAVID JOSHUA FLEET
BRUCE F. BENNETT
EDWARD G. SCHILLER
CYNTHIA (CINDY) COYLE
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
JASON DANIEL HAWKINS
BRIAN PATRICK MARKEE
DOUGLAS C. CURTISS
BRYAN SCOT LAVOIE
CINDY CABRAL-BEATSON
CHARLES PHILLIPS

June

COLIN M. DORAN
DONNA ANN WOLFSON
SCOTT MOTUZAS
DAVID PASQUANTONIO
JUSTIN MAYER
STEVEN GRILLO
LAURIE J. LANDERS
NATHAN TRAVIS UNRUH

CHAPTER TIDBITS

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*.





THE SIBLING CORNER

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



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

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

A Sibling Dies

by © L. Nicole Dean

For Don

It is January first. My heart twinkles once again because the holidays are over. How can a season of light bring so much dark? Thirty years ago, on Christmas morning, my brother died in our home by suicide in a very violent manner. He was 23; my other brother was 24; and I was 19 years old. Our family of five was irretrievably shattered. Don, my brother who died, was so much a part of us. He brought so much joy in his living and then so much pain in his dying. Who am I to grieve him still? The memories well up every December like a deep dark night unbidden. Anger, sadness, rejection, guilt become my Christmas ornaments. "Give me back my family, give me back my Christmas, you creep. Give me back your laughter," I want to shout at him. Who am I to miss him? Who am I to rage when he was the one in the grips of a pain so untenable that he could not speak of it, but only act upon it? Who am I to cry? Well, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor after all. One doesn't get there on a water slide, if you know what I mean. When Christmas rolls around, I do my dance with grief once again. Some years, it's a waltz; other years a tango. It doesn't seem to matter if it's two, twenty or thirty years since my brother died, I get out my dancing shoes. I don't go looking for pain like some wacky masochist. It finds me. Some years I announce - around November 25th, "I'm over this." I act accordingly.

I shop for Christmas Cards and don't go near my dancing shoes. It doesn't matter. They find me. It's not like I didn't have therapy. I've had dance therapy, art therapy, regular therapy, travel therapy, friendship therapy, biofeedback/hypnosis therapy, creampuff therapy, swimming therapy, forgiveness therapy, spiritual community therapy, law school therapy . . . Law School therapy? The fun had to end somewhere.

Seriously, losing a sibling is heart wrenching and no laughing matter. It took me ten or fifteen years to truly laugh again, let alone make light of myself. That just happened this year. No doubt, because I am writing of it, rather than speaking of it, which I rarely do. It feels safer to write.

Other than to therapists, I've spoken of his death to three people in thirty years. Who could understand, I felt, and why diminish his being or expose myself? I adored my brother Don - he made me laugh like a monkey. I adore both my brothers; as a child they were my world. Not very healthy perhaps, but it worked for me. Home life was chaotic and quite frightening because my father was more than a little nuts. My mother's energy was spent containing his insanity and keeping our bodies and souls together. She was part steel, part angora. We never spoke of Don after his death. The community ostracized us; my father took a trip down devil's lane, and my mother mourned my brother until the day she died. I'm sad to say that we never had Don's picture in our home again, because the pain was too severe. It seems we could not get past it. We went to our separate corners and quietly mourned. It was different years ago; so much remained hidden. Self-healing groups were non-existent, shrinks were stigmas, and the Catholic Church unforgiving. I couldn't save him. I was the last person he talked with on Christmas Eve. For months, I barely spoke and relived the shock daily. I ate a lot. Death by mashed potatoes. That was sure to bring him back. I retreated into a private world for several years where if I wasn't dead, I'd sure like to be. This is grief. And it does soften over time.

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It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way. It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep, knowing that love knits the bones of despair together, tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before. Knowing that the fires of your being burn the cross of despair. Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure and can take it and transform the pain into joy.

Joy for having known this person, for a day or ten years or two months. Joy for having the courage to be. For knowing yourself in many garments. For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself. The broken heart opens and mends itself. In the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening. Joy seeps into me. After all, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor.

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MOTHER'S DAY AND GRADUATION

After my daughter Kyra died on November 14 of 2004, one of my first thoughts was I am no longer a mother, because Kyra was my only child. It didn't take me long to realize that that was not true, I am and always will be Kyra's mom. As I have walked my grief journey I have found myself referring to grief as labor. It then came to me that for me, losing Kyra was like giving birth in reverse. I experienced intense emotional and physical pain that I wondered if I could endure, similar to the physical pain of labor, only in grief it lasts for weeks, months and years. It took my breath away, brought me to my knees and often I found myself crying out in anguish and anger, like child birth. It has been over a year and a half since Kyra died and I have felt a break in the pain. It has started back up recently due to graduation but I know it will ease some after May.

Some women experience false labor leading up to the birth of their child. I think that those intense pains that come from out of nowhere and last only a short time is something that I will forever experience. I now realize, that in letting go of her death, I can embrace and carry her spirit with me always. So, I liken grief to giving birth in reverse.

I go from Mother's day to Graduation, because Kyra would have graduated from High School at the end of May. Graduation was something I knew would be hard for me to endure without her here, alive and being part of the celebration. I thought about what Kyra graduating would mean to me and it didn't take me long to come up with, it was going to be my day to celebrate.

Kyra was an intelligent child with a low attention span, a need to talk, and lower than I would have liked motivation. It was a frustration that her teachers and I shared. So, homework time was a challenge and I used motivational charts, rewards and even punishment. But, I quickly found that you can't force someone to be motivated and went back to encouraging. I knew that she would come around and become motivated and I started seeing it her Junior year the year she died. I thought that graduation would be the reward for all the long nights and constantly trying to encourage and motivate. Well, it's not to be and I had to decide how will I endure graduation. I began to think about all she is missing. I believe in Heaven so I don't believe she is missing any joy or good times, because I believe she is now experiencing indescribable joy and unimaginable good times. The reality of what she is missing is, she is missing misery, pain, frustration, disappointment, a broken heart, grief, hopelessness and agony.

And I am missing her incredible joy and zest for life, her strong faith, beautiful smile and her wonderful heart.

As I close I remember when I was pregnant with Kyra, I took two helpings of food because I said I'm eating for two. Now I will try my best to live life to the fullest and be all that I can because now I'm living for two. Just as her living made me want to be a better person, her dying will make me a better person if I allow it, because I now carry her with me. I will strive to do and see life the way she would have if she could have stayed here longer.

**Julie Short
In Loving Memory of Kyra
TCF, Southeastern IL**

You were on my mind . . .

When I woke up this morning... You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm, like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me. Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and inner feelings of pain and sadness pass.

We will have joy and great happiness because we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning it will be OK that you were on my mind... You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will be forever.

**Michael Tyler
TCF, Lighthouse Chapter**



The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest



A Grieving Father Looks At Mother's Day

*Will the circle be unbroken by and by, Lord, by and by?
Maybelle Carter*

On Sunday, May 13, 2001, religious and secular institutions across our western hemisphere will celebrate Mother's Day. Corporate America will eagerly open its arms, that is its doors, to embrace Mom with sales. Florists will be working overtime to insure that floral bouquets arrive on time. Restaurants will be offering special Mother's Day meals so families can honor mom by eating out. In synagogues, temples, and places of worship, mothers will be honored in a variety of ways. There will be silent, invisible mothers on that day. They will go unrecognized for the most part. They will be generally unnoticed. They will even be ignored. They are the grieving mothers. For them, the day is not a celebration, but endurance. Mother's Day changes completely for them after the death of a child. The pain is a pain only another grieving mother can relate to.

All of the imagery that is conjured up doesn't necessarily help either. The pages of the hymnbook flutter with the images of a mother and her children. Read the titles of the songs as you flip the pages: "My Mother's Old Bible Is True," "Will The Circle Be Unbroken?," "Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me," and, "Are All The Children In?" Religious guidebooks and holy texts are filled with thousands of references and pictures of mothers nurturing their children. This motherly love is central to all the religions of the world. The implied message is that a mother's love for her children is a bond quite unlike any other. So the death of a child, to them, must feel quite unlike any other loss. These wonderful words and images which are meant to comfort, end up tormenting them.

I write this column as a grieving father. I share my insights from my personal experiences and my readings on child-loss. But a lot of my education has come from the truest source of all, my forever-best friend, Debby. She has taught me that a mother's pain is so inexplicable, except to other grieving mothers, because when their child dies, a unique bond is broken. I cannot understand this bond, because like all Dads I am an outside observer so many times in the birthing process. But I do know that this bond exists. My many hours of watching The Discovery Channel and Animal Planet with my son, Carl, taught me one lesson, nature's lesson. Never mess with mothers. There's a reason why mother bears have notorious reputations. They fiercely protect their young.

There is a deep, mysterious, and unique relationship that a mother has with her child. Pregnancy is the start of a bond, which men cannot fully understand. The intricacies of feeding, nurturing, and protecting that new life, is beyond the scope of male experience. It just boggles my mind that my wife did all those jobs 24 hours a day, and still worked a regular job too.

Fathers are sort of detached observers in the birth process. Mothers are participants in the clearest meaning of the word. Their bodies work all day and night. They feel the movements of the new life within them; endure the hardships and sicknesses. Go through intense ups and downs. Live with the sheer terror of the unknown. Mix all these ingredients together and the result becomes a spiritual umbilical cord of great durability between a mother and the new life within her.

Nothing can sever that cord. It survives all the troubles and turmoil in life that children can bring. Nothing can break through that cord. Nothing, that is, except a child's untimely death. Now, I am trying to understand all of this in my finite, male mind, and frankly, I can't. I can't begin to understand a mother's keen sense of suffering when a child dies. I am left only to my inadequate imagination of her emptiness within. I caught glimpses of this suffering watching Debby sob and repeatedly cry out, "I can't protect him anymore! I can't comfort him anymore. I can't treat his hurts anymore!" Truly, a big part of a mother dies when her child dies.



I share these thoughts with grieving family members and friends so there can be some sort of understanding. Mother's Day will never be the same. If it is a first time after the passing of a young one, anxiety and grief will be severe, frequent, and intense. Expect those feelings, but they will also pass.

Here are some suggestions, which come from grief counselors and experienced grieving parents. Keep the level of anxiety and anticipation low. Let the grieving mother set the tone for the day. Let it be her day to observe in her fashion.

Have a plan for the day. It can be the simplest of plans, and it should be. Elaborate plans can cause more grief, not less.

Communicate the family plans with all family members and friends. Be assertive. Stick to those plans. If a quiet day is needed, do it. If many friends and family are the answer, do it.

Words can hurt or heal. So choose the words of encouragement wisely. Resolve to be a good listener that day.

Remember that the best gift to give to a grieving mother can't be bought. It is priceless. It can't be wrapped. It is too immense. That gift is you.

Now, I close with something for all you precious, compassionate mothers. Please be good to yourselves, you have surely earned it.

Aaron Pueschel



The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest

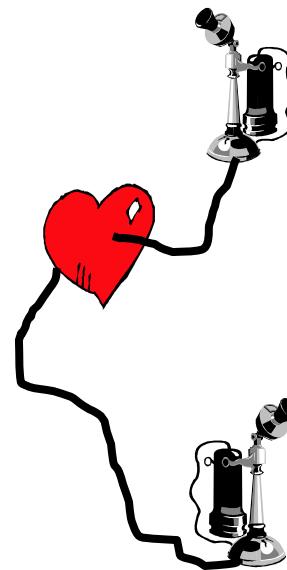


Phone Friends

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 19, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
Judith Cherrington,...**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer,(508)473-4087

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



A Father's Love Is Priceless

This will be my husband's third Father's Day without my son, Todd. My husband and I married when Todd was eight years old. Todd's biological father had little in common with him; my son desperately needed a role model who also provided guidance and structure. One of the reasons I decided to marry John was his real concern and love for my son.

As Todd grew, he and John took many trips together, fishing in Canada and meeting Jimmy Doolittle, skiing in Colorado together, going to car shows, car parts swap meets, always attending Autorama in Houston. Todd confided in John that his dream was to rebuild a GTO and enter it in Autorama. John took Todd to the "Pac Man" Tournament in Houston where Todd placed in the top 10 in the city. These were excursions that Todd and John shared.

John taught Todd how to change the oil and other fluids in a car, rebuild an engine, handle a hammer, measure twice and cut once, use a Shop Smith and other electric tools, lay a solid ceramic tile floor, read a blueprint and so much more that every boy should know.

But most of all, John showed Todd how to love a woman and children with his heart and soul. He never actively gave instructions, his example of gentleness, small gifts, sweet compliments, thoughtfulness, cheerful attitude and perpetual optimism helped to shape the man that my son became.

At Todd's wedding rehearsal dinner, each family member was asked by my dad what they would like to say to the bride or groom.

John tried to express his feelings to Todd but his tendency to wear his emotions on his sleeve overcame him. He ended up in tears. After the speeches, Todd came over and hugged John; I snapped a picture of that moment. It will always be a treasure to John and to me.

After he married, Todd and John continued to do things together. They went to car shows, worked together on projects in Todd's home and our home. At family gatherings they would sit and talk about the world, business activities, career goals and their optimistic dreams for hours at a time.

The last project that Todd and John did together was put up signage for a company that I had inherited from my Dad a few years earlier. They drove 1,000 miles to get there. Those five days were great for both of them. Todd worked hard helping John get the signs mounted and winterizing the company's building. He picked out memorabilia that was my dad's to bring home and keep. It was a sentimental journey.

On the trip home, the unthinkable happened. The cruise control was set at 70 mph; a vehicle in the right lane suddenly swerved into John's lane, tapping the Dodge Durango's right front quarter panel. John's automatic reaction was to swerve away from the drifting vehicle. For reasons yet unknown, the airbag deployed, the Durango launched across the median at 70 mph, skidded into the oncoming traffic, slammed into a semi trailer, rolled over and landed on its wheels. Todd suffered massive head injuries and injuries to the right side of his body. John was bruised from the airbag but refused medical treatment.

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And so after heroic efforts on the part of an angel nurse who witnessed the accident, Todd was transported to a hospital. The doctors worked feverishly to bring him back. He was stabilized and loaded on a life flight helicopter, but he died a minute later. John was still standing at the heliport when the helicopter landed. "He's gone," they told him. John screamed and cried as he walked alongside the gurney into the hospital. John stayed with Todd for a long time after he died. He talked to him. He called me. He talked to Todd some more. He continued to ask Todd "Why? Why did you die? Why wasn't it me?" This question still haunts him.

So this Father's Day I will remind John how much he did for Todd, how much he contributed to shaping the man that Todd became and how much Todd loved him. There is little else that I can say to this gentle man who wears his emotions on his sleeve, contributed so much to the formation of a very special man and loved my son with all his heart.

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

Cleaning Out Her Room

The other day we cleaned out our daughter's room. Time had remained the same in this room for two and a half years.

All that we needed was for our 8 year old Stephanie to come home! Come home to a room filled with games, books, toys—all the memories that today remind us of how special her life was.

We caressed lovingly the sailor cap she wore at her last dance recital. Her first "wooby," now scraps of cloth, but so soft and familiar, Stef refused to give it up until one day we hid it, told her it was lost, and replaced it with a new one. How soft it now felt in our hands. Her "Skip It," purchased only a few days before she died. How excited she was! "Thank you mommy, thank you, thank you! I love you! I love you!" How long her mom had searched to find one for her. How short the time she was able to use it.

Her Rainbow Brite sleeping bag, given to her one Christmas Eve. She slept for weeks on the floor in that sleeping bag. How much it meant to her. Her baton, her Burger King watch, her "Sweet Pea." Her stuffed animals. They all screamed "**I was Stef's!**" Clothes were folded. Tears flowed. A new baby is coming to live in Stef's room. We know Stef would approve. If ever a guardian angel exists, we know it is Stef. She will watch over her little sister. Her love remains to fill this room. *It will never be empty!*

**Wayne Loder
Lakes Area, TCF, Chapter
Commerce Township, MI**

The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost An Infant.

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should the child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for the parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant:

SHAME AND GUILT - Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.



NO MEMORIES - Parents may only have "souvenirs of the occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

LONELINESS IN GRIEF - It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is newborn, they may give the impression you are grieving unnecessarily over a non-person. They hope you can "forget this baby" and "have another one."

NEGLECTED FATHERS - Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby, too.

MOTHERS VS. FATHERS - Since the mother has bonded with her child during the pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father's, who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

**Claire McGoughey & Sue Shelley
Infant Group. TCF. St. Louis, MO**



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

Fold & Tape _____



The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest



Mother's Day Floods the Heart with Memories

I remember the day you were born; it was the Wednesday after Mother's Day in 1967. The first time I held you and looked at your sweet face, your rosebud mouth, tiny nose, big, soft eyes and long eyelashes, my heart was forever captured. You wrapped your little hand around my finger and looked at me as if you'd known me forever. For over an hour, silent tears trickled down my face. An unexplained sadness swept over me. I blamed it on the war of the day in the Middle East, Vietnam, the mess we mortals had made of the world. But mostly it was fear for your future in an uncertain, mean world - how to keep you safe yet not smother you. In that hour I came to see the deepest meaning of a Mother's love.

Last year was my first Mother's Day without you. I went to the cedar chest you gave me and took out all the Mother's Day cards you had ever given me. I put them on the piano. The hand painted cards, the little hand plaque, the carefully written cards and finally the many cards you selected from age 12 until your 35th year. It was a painful day, a heartbreak time for me. I thought of myself as a childless Mother.

Will I torture myself again this year? I don't think so. This year I will quietly and thankfully remember that you were in my life for over 35 years. I will reflect on the fact that the single defining moment in my life was your birth. I reframed my life on that day. Had you never lived, I would be a different person today. Learning to put the needs and wants of my only child ahead of all else has made me a better person. I loved being your Mom, watching you learn to walk and talk, grow and learn. Answering your questions, helping you with your projects and studies, encouraging you, talking with you, candidly discussing your strengths and teaching you to capitalize on those strengths while minimizing the impact of any weaknesses. Gradually you became self-sufficient, kind and gentle, concerned about others, soft-spoken and quietly independent. You learned to keep your own counsel, lend a hand when needed and see people with your heart but evaluate situations with your mind. Intuitively I cautioned you against violence, alcohol, drugs, meaningless pursuits, dysfunctional and negative people. In the process of helping to form who you were and how you perceived the world, I became a better person. You became the man that every Mother wants her son to be: strong, self-sufficient, kind, loving, balanced, mature and accomplished.



You are my son. And while we no longer inhabit the same plane, the wonders and joy of our time together on this earth will sustain me always. While I live there will always be silent tears of overwhelming sadness, but these are tempered by the wonderful memories we shared. In my heart I hear your wishes for a Happy Mother's Day.

Annette Mennen Baldwin

IT'S OKAY

It's Okay to Grieve:

The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow, our dear one returned. Such hurt!

It's okay to grieve.

It's Okay to Cry:

Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to "level off" and continue our cruise along the stream of life.

It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal:

We do not need to "prove" we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel "guilty," for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death.

It's a healthy sign of healing.

It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh:

Laughter is not a sign of "less" grief. Laughter is not a sign of "less" love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh.

It's okay to laugh.

**Marianne Waite
TCF, El Paso, TX**



2009 National Conference Information Announced

Two speakers have been announced for the 2009 TCF National Conference in Portland August 7-9, 2009. Plus, early reservation for those wishing to stay at the Doubletree Hotel Portland, site of the 32nd national TCF conference, is now open.

Speaking at the conference will be Reg and Maggie Green and Michele Longo Eder. Reg and Maggie are the parents of Nicholas Green, the seven-year-old American boy who was shot by highway bandits in Italy in 1994. Their decision to donate his organs to seven Italians became a major news story around the world, spawning thousands of organ donations in Italy (a country where organ donations were virtually unheard of before Nicholas' death) and around the world. This remarkable story was made into a CBS movie of the week called *The Nicholas Effect*.

Michele Longo Eder is author of *Salt in our Blood—The memoir of a Fisherman's Wife*. Michele, an accomplished lawyer, started journaling what daily life was like for her while her husband and sons were commercial fishing off the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and northern California. Never did she dream that her journaling would include the account of a personal tragedy that struck just before Christmas 2001.

Reservations for those attending TCF's national conference are now being accepted by the Doubletree Hotel Portland where the conference will be held. TCF has negotiated for a large block of rooms at a special price for those attending the conference. Rate is \$129 per room per night in several different configurations.

As always, we suggest that you make reservations early to avoid disappointment. They may be reserved online at the national conference page at www.compassionatefriends.org. You may also call the Doubletree Hotel at 1-503-281-6111 and receive the negotiated price, but you must identify yourself as attending The Compassionate Friends National Conference. The rooms are available at this special rate for those staying the nights of August 5-August 9. Last day for reservations, if rooms are still available, will be July 4.

