



# 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 2022**

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## YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:00 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory.  
**May 17th. & June 21st.**

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last weekend or earlier if you plan to attend.**  
**Directions....**On Route 16, going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.  
Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.  
**May 31st. & June 28th.**

## 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**

## WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

**Weather Cancellation**  
**In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:  
Ed or Joan Motuzas at  
(508) 473-4239**



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## Chapter Information

### Co-leaders

\* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239  
 \* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Secretary

\* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Treasurer

\* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

### Webmaster

\* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

### Librarian

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

### Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

### Senior Advisor

\* Rick Dugan 508/877-1363

### Steering Committee \*

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942  
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715  
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085  
 Mitchell Greenblatt 857/225-7135  
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998  
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

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

### Regional Coordinator

Dennis Gravelle  
 638 Pleasant St.  
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222  
 Phone (978) 537-2736  
 dennisg@tcf.email.com

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

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

Web Page:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

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

## TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

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

Mrs. Kathy Marden in loving memory of her grandson's **Patrick Cuff** on his birthday June 17th. and **Troy Marden** on his birthday July 12th. "Forever loved and never forgotten".

Mr. & Mrs. Burton in loving memory of their son **Alan R. Stuchins** on his birthday March 2nd. "Every day is One day closer to you".

Ms. Maureen McTiernan in loving memory of her daughter **Shannon A. McTiernan** on her anniversary April 13th. "Forever loved and never forgotten".

Mr. Donald DiLorenzo in loving memory of his son **Christopher D. DiLorenzo**. "You are always on my mind".

### Chapter Notes

Dennis Gravelle our Regional Coordinator and I have been talking for a few months now about the possibility of having a group meeting with all the chapters that Dennis is responsible for. There are many plus's for this type of meeting, One is that, most Chapter Leaders lead in a vacuum, "If it's not broken, don't fix it" but what if you could improve the leadership by talking with other Chapter Leaders? I can speak for myself, "When it became obvious that our chapter would soon have to find a new Chapter Leader in order to continue our chapter meetings.

Back in the day the National Office was holding a number of weekend seminars annually on "Becoming a Chapter Leader". All I had to do was find my way to where they would be holding the weekend seminar. When I saw that there was going to be one down in Connecticut I asked Aaron White that I would like to attend and he said "Gee, maybe I should go with you, I've never gone to one." Now I think, if you want training to be a Chapter Leader you have to attend a National Conference for a one day seminar (on Thursday before the conference). That is one reason we need to to meet as a group, to share idea's and maybe we can learn to be better Chapter leaders to keep our chapters strong. Tentative plans are to be held in Milford, on a Saturday after Labor Day. More information will be forth coming.



# 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, 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*

JASON LADIEU  
COREY S. VAUTIER  
SEAN MICHAEL REARDON  
ADAM SCOTT COLE  
LEA SIEBERT

### *June*

KELLEIGH M. WASHEK LYNCH  
RUSSELL J. TERES  
IAN GREENBLATT  
JENNA LOUISE GIARDINI

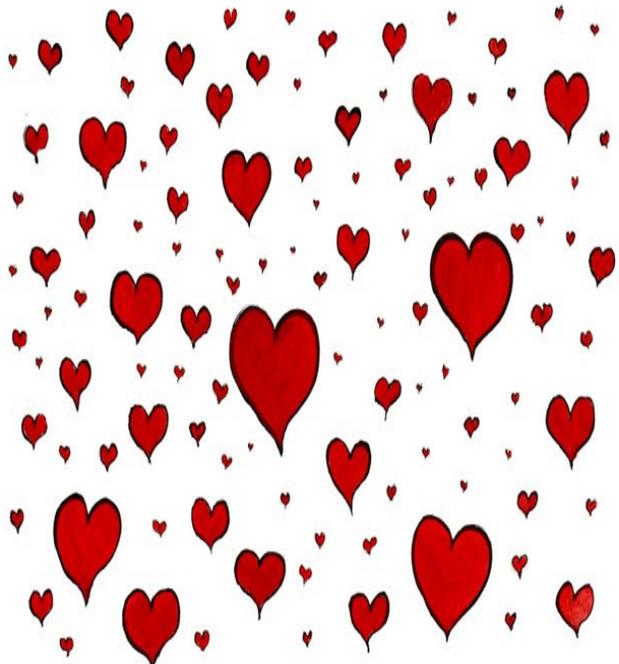
## *Birthdays*

### *May*

LARRY DUGAN  
SEAN PATRICK COTTER  
MICHAEL D. DOW  
EVAN S. GARNETT  
DANIEL J. SCOTT Jr.  
PAULA BETH WATERS  
ANDREA RENEE BOSWORTH  
RYAN MICHAEL GAUDET

### *June*

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN LILL  
MONICA MICHELLE CURRAN  
KATHLEEN ANN STETSON  
MICHAEL VINCENT TYNAN  
JASON L. MILLIGAN



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.

## ***Only Surviving Siblings: Am I an Only Child Now?***

In families with only two children, the siblings often look out for and protect each other, which makes the loss of one even more difficult for the surviving child. The brothers and/or sisters looked forward to a long and enjoyable future, never thinking that they would be separated. There was the assumption that the siblings would grow old together, reminiscing about the past. Not only are there the intense sadness and feelings of total devastation, but the surviving sibling may feel a huge sense of responsibility for the future care of the parents. While both siblings are alive, there might not be much thought about the loss of a parent, as they believe they will always be there to help each other make decisions when the time comes-that they would always go through everything together.

Another concern is that the surviving sibling won't have any family to rely on to remember the past.

With the loss of a sibling, we are left an immense grief and a "new reality" that we never wanted, never asked for. The anguish and loneliness are overwhelming. Those who have no surviving siblings to share their thoughts, feelings, memories, and pain are left to deal with a wider range of issues. An Only Surviving Sibling sharing session is one of the most requested topics at The Compassionate Friends national conferences.

Bereaved parents often have a hard time with the question, "How many children do you have?" Many only surviving siblings also have a hard time dealing with similar issues. They may not be up to explaining what happened. It often depends on the relationship to the person asking.

The best choice is to answer whichever way is easier emotionally. Another question surviving siblings often ask themselves is, "Am I an only child now?" The sibling who has died will always be their brother or sister, but they may want to spare themselves the pain of people's reactions to hearing of the death (or just the pain of having to say it, which is hard enough). It is so difficult to process the fact that this one person, who shared the past, will not be apart of their future. It's good to remember that no matter how the question is answered, we will always be an older or younger brother or sister.



Many only surviving siblings have said that it really made an incredible difference when they talked to others who had lost a sibling. It doesn't make it better, but being in contact with people who understand certainly makes it less confusing and more tolerable than being alone.

Many only surviving siblings have found lasting friendships through The Compassionate Friends sibling chat, sibling forum, and sibling pen pal program. For more information on these programs, visit the sibling resources page on the national Web site, [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

***By Daniel Yoffee  
TCF Board of Director,  
Sibling Representative***



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## GRANDPARENTS

In our involvement in the grief over the death of our child, we fail to realize that grandparents also grieve. Although not in the same way or to the same extent we do, they do grieve. Their grief is two-sided, one for the child who is dear to them and the other for their own child who is suffering.

Just as the parent does, the grandparent loses his future. One of the joys of grandparenthood is the knowledge that through grandchildren they achieve immortality. It is expected that their name will be carried on through them. At the death of their grandchild, that branch of their family tree is cut off. What should have been will not be. In cases of an only child, there will be no future generation. Just as for the parent, the family of the grandparent will never be complete again. At family gatherings, for them too, is the empty place for the child no longer there.

Feelings of guilt can be strong for grandparents. Survive! guilt is the strongest. It is never expected that a grandparent will live longer than the grandchild. Grandparents usually feel that they have lived a long and full life. The dead child was denied that. "Why not me?" is a phrase most have uttered. The fact that they are still alive while a young child or young adult is dead is difficult for many to bear.

Grandparents feel anger just as parents do. They can be angry with God for taking the child, or even for not taking them. They can be angry with the doctors or nurses, feeling that they didn't do enough for the child. They can be angry with the person they feel is responsible for the child's death.

Sometimes the death of a grandchild brings back memories of their own child who had died many years in the past. This can be a painful revival of the grief they felt was over or that they had buried. This is a fairly common experience for grandparents since the deaths of children occurred more often before the days of advanced medical technology.

In addition to the grief over the death of their grandchild, there is the sadness and pain at seeing their own child in such torment. Seeing one's child in pain and not being able to ease that pain is extremely difficult for grandparents, and leaves them with feelings of helplessness and frustration.

Many try to take over necessary tasks such as cooking or caring for surviving siblings. The chores may seem so mundane to grandparents that they do not perceive themselves as being helpful to their suffering child. If grandparents are sick or incapacitated and cannot be of help to their child, they may feel guilty. In today's mobile society, many times grandparents must travel great distances to be with their child. If that travel is not possible, this can also be a source of guilt.

Many times grandparents feel that by not showing their grief they are providing physical and emotional strength for their child. This is a mistake. Suppressing their grief can be as damaging for grandparents as it is for parents. This can lead to unresolved grief and create problems for the grandparents. In addition this may be seen by the bereaved parent as a lack of concern.



Bereaved parents must consider the needs of the grandparents and at the same time be open and honest with them about their own needs. We must let them know how they can help us, but at the same time we must be aware that they, too, need help. Mutual sharing of feelings between bereaved parents and grandparents can be helpful to both in the recovery process. The sharing of not only painful feelings, but happy memories of the child with grandparents can be helpful for both, and it can also create a deeper relationship in the family.

**Margaret Gerner**  
**National Newsletter**

### Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)
- Chapter Co- Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu
- (508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net
- Worcester Chapter
- Chapter Co-Leaders: Kathy Snay (508) 347-0981
- kathysnay@gmail.com
- Susan Power ....spower7881@msn.com
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)
- Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole
- (781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com
- North Central Mass.Chapter (Westminster, Gardner, Fitchburg areas)
- Chapter phone line: (978) 786-5014
- Chapter Co-Leaders: Denise Whitney...
- dwhitney@acton.ma.gov
- Chapter Co-Leader: Carolann Picnacik...
- carolannpicnacik@gmail.com



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## A Mother's Love

I need no pictures to remember your warm smile; the lines of your face are embedded in my memory of you. I gave you life in one second of pain, for which you returned 13 years of yourself sometimes quiet, sometimes noisy, but always thoughtful.

Sometimes I hear a voice that sounds like you, and I pause. That pang of hurt stems from a tiny empty spot you have left in my life. I carried you in my womb, then later in my arms, but I will carry you in my heart forever.

*By Joy Morning,  
for her friend Ginny Pelczynski,  
in memory of Billy.  
TCF, Phoenix, AZ*

## It's Not Your Fault

Depression, leading to suicide, is like a cancer. It starts quietly, unseen, unnoticed, slowly changing, slowly draining energy and spirit until it reaches a point where life is no longer possible, and the body must cease to function. So it is with depression, the mind reaches a point where life is no longer bearable, and the mind must bring life to an end.

The surviving loved one is no more the blame nor the cause of a person's depression and suicide than they are of causing the start of a cancer. The surviving loved one is no more capable of stopping the depression than they are capable of stopping a cancer.

As the survivor, you must bear the sorrow and the grief, but not the guilt, for it was not your fault.

*Ray Kulp,  
TCF, Sonoma Chapter, CA*



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process.

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

*Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)  
Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)  
Janice Parmenter (Sub.)(Tyler's Mom)  
Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)*

## The Birthday

She had not noticed me as she entered the cemetery as I sat quietly beside my son's grave. For a while, lost in my own thoughts of my son's 28th birthday, I forgot about her. Then the sound of her tear-filled, croaky, off-key singing caught my attention. She sat by her son's grave, all alone, and sang "Happy Birthday." Her eyes seemed to strain to see through the stone as she sang with tears in her voice "Happy Birthday To You." In a flash my mind carried me back to other birthdays of my own son. I saw a chocolate cake smeared one year old face, a blond-haired baby face, a crew cut little boy face, a carefully groomed and scrubbed adolescent face, a long-haired, holey blue jeaned teenager's face, a curly haired, again carefully groomed, young adult face. I guess I saw all twenty-one birthday faces of my own son and tried to imagine six or seven more. "Happy Birthday To You" she sang her croaky, off-key song sitting beside his grave.. all alone. And I felt "Happy Birthday" must surely be the saddest song in the world to mothers like us. Happy Birthday, Dear... Happy Birthday To You....

*Fay Harden  
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL*

## FATHER'S DAY

As the day approaches, I wonder how I will react. Am I still a father?

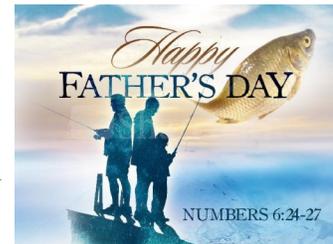
I will sit quietly, never allowing friends and family to see how I feel.

I miss my son, but I can't allow myself to "break". I must remain strong and always be the "rock".

I wish I could just let someone know how much I miss my little angel. How much I cry and how much I miss hearing. "Dad, I love you."

I am a father, but I wonder, "Will I just pretend, as usual that it doesn't bother me?"

Remember me, for I hurt, too, on this special day.



*Doug Hughes  
TCF, Tampa, FL*



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

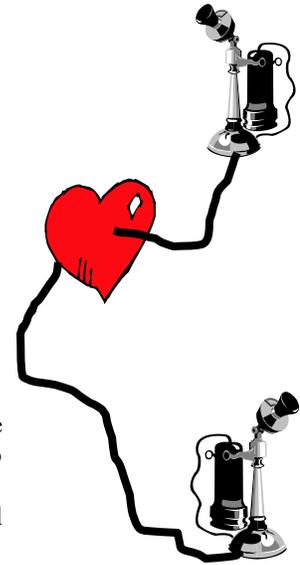


## Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure, .....(508)473-4239  
Janice Parmenter, .....**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction, .....(508)528-5715  
Judy Daubney, .....**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide, .....(508)529-6942  
Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident, .....(508)366-2085  
Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)653-0541

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.



### DO REAL MEN ATTEND TCF MEETINGS?

It has often bothered me that more men and persons of cultural minorities don't attend TCF meetings. I know there are social and cultural restraints which inhibit many bereaved persons from seeking outside help or support. Being both a man and a member of an ethnic group, I know very well the false pride which often restrains us from admitting we are not as self-sufficient as we want others to believe. We are taught (men in particular) at a young age not to reveal when we are hurt. We must be strong and brave and silent.

Stoic endurance is really not unique in any culture. The British call it "keeping a stiff upper lip." The Japanese call it *gaman*. Hispanics pride themselves on their ability to *aguantar*. In the U.S. it is embodied in the Puritan ethic.

When I began attending TCF meetings regularly, I wondered for a long time whether I was a "real man." Was I less macho than my peers? Couldn't I handle my grief in solitary dignity? The answers, I finally decided, were yes, no, and maybe. Maybe I could have adjusted to my son's death all by myself. Maybe I could have shunned the possibilities of self-destructive behavior, drunkenness, drug abuse, wild living, or the unraveling of my family life without TCF. Maybe I could have dealt alone with all the anger, despair, and depression. Fortunately I didn't have to.

I readily admit I wasn't very enthusiastic about going to my first TCF meeting. I imagined a group of people sitting around crying on each other's shoulders, bemoaning their cruel fate. Instead, I found people who were hurting as much as I; who, like me, were angry, who also often felt depressed, but who were working very hard to mend the tattered fabric of their lives!

I soon discovered that this was a place where I could talk about my grief and still feel safe about it. Nobody was going to think me less of a man for not getting over my son's death in a few months.

TCF doesn't promise or offer any quick fixes. There are no magic words or formulas to take away your grief. Whatever "magic" takes place, I know now, happens slowly. I don't believe it is possible for a bereaved parent to "forget," but I think TCF's support and understanding help make it easier for us to go on with our lives. We need not become lifelong emotional cripples.

To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try.



Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the "magic" doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have. TCF is for any and all bereaved parents, men and women, minorities and gringos, people of any or no religious faith. The one thing everyone at TCF has in common is the death of a child, and how it feels.

**Steve Perez**  
**TCF, Denver, CO**



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## *On pain and healing...*

In pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies. When we breathe deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissipate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger.

This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don't want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been "lost" to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain.

We include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: "There's more room in a broken heart."

*From the book, "Good Grief"  
by Deborah Morris Coryell*

## *Though. I Can't Be With You*

He always remembered Mother's Day With his special cards and flowers. No matter how far away he'd be There was this special bond of ours. The card that means the most.

Because it says what's in his heart Remembering Mom on Mother's Day Though many miles apart. It says that many miles between two people Can draw them closer in their heart.

These passing days can deepen special feelings, Even though we are apart. I feel his presence all the time, Especially on Mother's Day. Reading framed words upon the wall, Feeling what he bad to say.

It hurts to know that he's not here to share this Mother's Day,

Though I find some consolation Iii what he had to say As I read those words all over again, Showing his deep love so true.

Wishing his mother the best on Mother's Day, "Though I can't be with you."

*Phyllis Coleman  
TCF, W. Jefferson, OH*

## *FATHER'S DAY*

FATHER'S DAY...not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a long-time Dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment which children may have brought to his life.

For those men who have lost a child, it can be a painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and in silence, either through their own desire for that approach, or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror.



But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day, because, as we noted in preparation for Mother's Day, the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the mom and dad who loved him or her. Love for one's offspring does not die when the body dies, and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity. We wish all our bereaved fathers a day of peace. In the midst of the grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child.

*Doug Hughes*

*Elgin Area Chapter, TCF, IL*

## *NEW TRADITIONS*

"Turn-turn-turn" are the words of a song that tell us there is a season for everything under the sun, a "time to be born; a time to die." This song is based on the quote from Ecclesiastes in the Book of Scripture that gives people permission to move on in life. One of the ways I've watched the people experience their grief is their use of the seasons to create new memories and recapture some of their favorite events with new rituals. Springtime may be a good time to think about new celebrations. Here is a list of things to think about any time of the year when you are faced with planning rituals for yourself and your family.

Plan ahead; don't let the day just happen; be specific. Write down the feelings associated with the special times.

Reach out to other family members and friends. Save some time alone to read, walk, listen to music, etc.

Plan some time to laugh and have fun with others. Create a new ritual by using candles, balloons, stories, religious ceremonies, gifts to others, Memorials, contributions, scholarships, donations to BP or others in memory of your child, flowers given in memory of your child are good ways to handle special days.

(continued on page 9)



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(continued from page 8)

Take trips; visit with family members; find new places to see; start special collections. Bring photos, ornaments, scrapbooks and other mementos to share with family members.

Starting new rituals takes planning. It's important to consider other family members' feelings too and include them in the planning. Explain why you are doing things differently, and talk about your feelings of these special occasions. Traditions start the first time you plan a ritual that can be performed over and over without too much change. Start with very simple activities and add them as your healing starts and when it feels right to do so.

**Therese Goodrich, BP of USA (Adapted)**

## **Some Ways To Help A Grieving Spouse**

- Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
- Cultivate transparency, openness and honesty.
- Accept the pain that you feel. Be willing to share it and to listen to your partner's expression of the pain they are feeling.
- Be patient with your partner and with yourself. Recognize that your partner is probably not at the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
- Don't expect your partner to be your only source of healing.
- Keep working at communicating. Give special attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice the gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically; the importance of human touching and hugging is hard to over estimate.
- Allow or create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy with their feelings, including their grief.
- Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
- Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you, as much as you feel pain over his or her death, your relationship involves far more than this child.



**Howard Cupp  
TCF, Norman, OK**

## **A Mother's Thoughts**

**YESTERDAY...**

We dreamed of how our future would be. Of times we'd share, my child and me. Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears. We'd stand together throughout the years. A promise of what life should always be. Of a child so dear, ever loving me.

**TODAY...**

My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief. I search for answers, but find no relief. The skies have darkened, no longer bright. For my child is gone, forever from sight. The dreams we shared can never be. They're left to linger in my memory.

**TOMORROW...**

My heart will push aside this cloud. That darkens my life like a heavy shroud. Once again I'll see the dawning light.

And know my child's love still burns bright. I'll remember the moments we both shared. I'll remember our love and how we cared. I'll remember my child now lives in me. And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.

**Carol Cichella  
TCF, Rockford, IL**

## **MY CHILD, MY CHILD "A Mother's Love"**

You say I have the memories  
That cannot be taken.  
I cry - there are so few  
Compared to what should have been.

You say she is in Heaven  
Singing with other precious angels, Playing her baby  
grand piano, And I say I wish it were here.

You say she feels no pain  
And no one can hurt her again,  
But my mother's instinct is to hold her, And protect her  
from such things.

You say she was an example for all, A goal for those  
who knew her. But think of how many more  
Lives she would have touched . . .

I know she is in God's arms, But a mother's pain remains  
Because I miss her so very much, My child, my friend,  
my Amy.

**Connie Montgomery  
TCF, Pekin, IL**



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## *Courage - Surprise - An Understanding*

### Attendance Requirement: **Courage**

I don't think I am unique. I did NOT want to attend a meeting of Compassionate Friends.

I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made 'a Devil's deal;' he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor - his debt some weeks away.

The thought of discussing death nauseates. We, my son and I, had made a bad deal.

### The Meeting: **A Surprise**

I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition.

My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

### The Result: **An Understanding**

Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick easy cures.

Grief is a catharsis. Most of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But there are nuggets - small ideas you will want to try or things you want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure.

Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people who attend the meetings do understand. And they try to help.

My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

### **What's In It For You?**

Compassionate Friends is here to help - to listen, to suggest, to understand. If you handle your grief well, you do not need Compassionate Friends. But we need you! Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please share it.

**Bob Watts**  
**TCF, Stamford, CT**



## *WAITING*

The ones of us who attended last month's meeting spoke briefly of a feeling of "waiting," that seemed to be common to most of us. For most of us, up to this point in our lives, any really bad experience we encountered was met with the attitude that nothing lasts forever and this too will end. Financial problems can be handled, bad marriages can be mended or dissolved and family relations can be restored. The old adage, "time heals everything" seemed to always apply and the things that seemed to be so devastating at the time, a few years down the road can be put behind us and simply remembered as a really bad time that we managed to get through.

And then we are confronted with the death of our child and a sense of "waiting." Waiting for this to be over, for our lives to return to the way they were "before." Our head knows that this can never be, but our heart is less accepting. After four years, I will find myself waiting for my daughter to come bouncing through the door with her three little ones in tow and ask "What's for dinner. Mom?" You see, my head knows this will never happen again, but my mother's heart is still waiting.

Part of our healing process surely must be in learning to make our hearts accept what our head already has. We must try to live again without waiting for that which can never happen. I have always felt that we can do anything in life if we really want to enough. But I have encountered a situation that I cannot change no matter how hard I try to do so. I must put my precious memories of my little girl in that special place in my heart, forever reserved, forever for her and pray for the day when I can remember her with smiles rather than tears and be grateful for the love she gave and the joy she brought.

**Donna Biggs**  
**Tri-County TCF, Mullens, WV**

## *MEMORIES*

Within each tear that falls  
Is a mirror ...  
That reflects a special moment  
In our lives.  
They trickle warmly down  
And land in a puddle  
In my heart.

**Tammy Tobac**  
**TCF, Pittsburgh, PA**



# **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST**



## ***How Long Does It Take?***

Reinvesting in life. How long does it take? When I wrote about reinvesting in life, I heard from so many of you that the article gave you hope for the future. That touched me. However, others expressed dismay that it would take so many years to recover. There is no timetable for grief. I speak simply from my own experience. Many of you probably can not see any hope in your future right now. You are certain that you will always feel this despondent. I understand.

Eight years ago I felt that way also. John and I went to our first meeting about three months after Susan's death. We were absolutely miserable throughout the meeting. I couldn't talk at all. I sat there sobbing continuously. There was a vise around my chest and a hopelessness that I would ever feel better again.

I frankly did not want to return to another meeting, but John said, "Mary, we've got to give it another try." I cried throughout that meeting also along with everyone else! Many of you who belong to the Arlington Chapter's "Class of '87" remember how it was.

Then it was John's turn. He didn't want to go back. However, one night he said, "Remember what that man said who was going through a depression? I keep remembering things that he said to look for so I can recognize depression when it hits." John realized that beneath our misery helpful advice was actually sinking in without our knowledge.

I can't tell you how long it took to see that there was any hope in the future for me. I do remember that each time depression hit, and it hit many times through the years, I gradually realized that I knew that there would be a light at the end of that particular tunnel if I just met the depression head on. Does that make sense? Somehow the depression wasn't as black when I knew that I could get over it in a few days.

The hope for a less miserable future is such a gradual thing. It steals upon us like the morning sunrise so gradual that it's hard to pinpoint exactly when the sun is finally up and everything is bright again. When the miserable feelings subside, it is difficult sometimes to remember exactly how bad it was.

You don't have to believe me right now. But give me a call in a couple of months or years. We can remember how it was for you then and how it is now. There is no timetable for the resolution of grief. For some, they will feel recovered within a year or two. For others, it may take longer. However, there is bound to be a tremendous difference if you are doing your grief work, not an easy assignment, but one made less difficult through sharing your grief with those who have been in your shoes and who understand you, The Compassionate Friends.

***Mary M. Bell  
Arlington, VA, Chapter, TCF***

## ***MOTHER'S DAY***

Another Mother's Day! But a different one this year. For you see, I am a mother, but my child isn't here.

I am a mother who is hurting for this child who was so dear, as I face this and other occasions, each and every year.

I am a mother who feels an emptiness over and over again, because I miss THIS child and all that could have been.

I am a mother who cared as I watched my child grow, and truly loved her more than anyone will ever know.

I am a mother who has memories and many tears to cry over regrets I'll have to live with until the day I die.

I am a mother who is thankful for the miracle of birth, and all my child has taught me about life and my own self-worth.

I just can't stop being a mother. Just because my child isn't here, because the love we had for each other will continue for years and years.

And so....On this special "Mother's" day, I will feel within my heart, all the pride, love and joy which are the parts that make me who I am, and what I'll always be, A MOTHER just remember that, please?

***By Judy A. Sittner  
(Borrowed from HOPE LINE, a newsletter  
published by HOPE FOR BEREAVED,  
Syracuse , New York***

## ***THE MISSING GRADUATE***

Parents' happy faces all around me with a glow from within, *Pomp & Circumstance* is playing, now the program will begin. The graduates all lined up, they are coming down the aisle, Some have serious faces, yet some have a little smile.

I looked down the aisle hoping for your face to come into sight, This is your class—it was to be your graduation night. All the graduates pass by, but none of them are you. A tug of my heart tells me you are not here, Your death is true. God called you home....

I wanted you here in such a bad way. Looking into your classmates' faces, Do they recall you, missing this day?

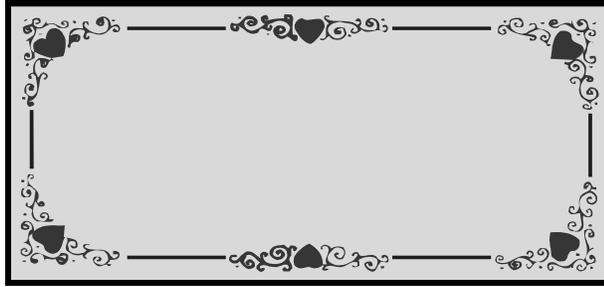
Memories, sweet memories now fill my mind and heart. There will be no golden tassel this day for my sweetheart.

They are oh! so happy, this isn't the time to be blue, now I must go shake a hand and get a hug or two.

***Emma Valenteen  
TCF, Valley Forge, PA***



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Address Correction Requested

Join us at our 45th National Conference being held in Houston, Texas August 5th – 7th! We have had a fantastic response so far and seats are filling up fast! Please visit [our conference page](#) to learn more and to register. You don't want to miss our early bird rates that end on May 31st! After three years of not being able to meet in person, we are really looking forward to being together! Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. We'd love to have you join us!



TCF 45th National Conference  
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022