



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 2012

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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 9:30 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 15th June 19th

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 29th June 26th

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. ©2012

Weather Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:

**Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

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

Secretary

- * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

- * Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

- * Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

- Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

Newsletter

- Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

- * Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

- Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
- Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
- Linda Teres 508/620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt 508/881-2111
- Judith Cherrington 508/473-4087

The chapter address is:

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

Regional Coordinator

Rick Mirabile
11 Ridgewood Crossing
Hingham, MA 02043
Phone (781) 740-1135
Email: Rmirabile@comcast.net

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

The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
Fax (630) 990-0246
Web Page: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Web Page
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.

Love Gifts

Mrs. Marilyn Rossetti in loving memory of her daughter **Cristina M. Rossetti**.

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Murphy in loving memory of their son **Michael Patrick Murphy** on his birthday May 17th and his anniversary May 31st.

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

Mr. & Mrs. Burton Stuchins in loving memory of their son **Alan R. Stuchins** on his birthday March 2nd.

Mr. & Mrs. Leo Pelletier in loving memory of their son **David Pelletier**.

Ms. Virginia A. Lombard in loving memory of her son **Robert L. Lombard Jr.** on his anniversary May 27th.

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boudreau in loving memory of their son **Nicholas L. Boudreau** on his birthday June 19th.

Mrs. Helen Homenick & Mrs. Viola Paulhus in loving memory of their grandson & son **Michael J. Paulhus**.

Mr. & Mrs. John Vaultier in loving memory of their son **Corey S. Vaultier** on his anniversary May 5th.

Ms. Betty Myers in loving memory of her son **William Bruse-Tagoe** on his anniversary July 6th.

Mrs. Beverly Marks in loving memory of her son **Shawn P. Marks** on his birthday July 12th.

Bunny Siebert in loving memory of her daughter **Lea M. Siebert** on her anniversary May 13th.





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

COREY S. VAUTIER
JON A. ALBA
ANDREW ROBERT BIBBO
BEATRICE ELIZABETH HUDSON
SHAUN LAMPILA
JORDANA L. CASSIDY
NICHOLAS POST
JOHANY NADEAU
TODD M. CARSON
LEA M. SIEBERT
RUTH A. ROMANS-BELITSOS
MICHAEL WEINSTOCK
SUSAN A. QUINLIVAN
LISA RANDALL
ROBERT F. DUMONT JR.
ROBERT L. LOMBARD JR.
DOLORES ROSE BERGERON
MICHAEL PATRICK MURPHY

June

KIM ASCHER
MATTHEW PISAPIA
MICHAEL HEARNS
RUSSELL J. TERES
LAURIE SLOPEK
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
SAMANTHA HAMILTON
IAN GREENBLATT

Birthdays

May

LEX ROTHMAN
COLIN M. DORAN
CHARLES SACKLER
BRUCE F. BENNETT
SCOTT W. RUTH
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
KELLI S. DONOVAN
MICHAEL PATRICK MURPHY
WILLIAM C. LEWIS
BRIAN JAMES MOORE
BRIANNA KIRBY
SHAUN LAMPILA
DOUGLAS C. CURTISS
CINDY CABRAL-BEATSON

June

DONNA ANN WOLFSON
KIM ASCHER
CHARLES E. PATTON
SCOTT MOTUZAS
JUSTIN MAYER
STEVEN GRILLO
NICHOLAS L. BOUDREAU
NICOLE FRADE
NICHOLAS POST



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

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.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Summertime

It sounds so easy. A soft, warm word, time to run barefoot, time to leave windows open all night. Summertime. Somehow it seems, doesn't it, that it's especially meant for children. Children on beaches, children on swings, children in large pools, children in tiny tubs.

We who do not have all of our children with us may feel the summertime in two ways. One is to remember shared events and adventures, there were so many. Long rides in a hot car, a nap in the back seat. The famous question, "Are we there yet?" Everything from a heat rash to ice cream cones and sand castles.

For us, another way to feel summertime is the special emptiness brought about by children who are no longer on this earth. They used to trot along on hikes in the hills; they used to gather wood for an evening fire. Now summer brings us again the melancholy awareness of their absence. Have you ever walked on some unfamiliar path, surprised about not having been there with the children? Even when there's nothing to remember, we are reminded of the children's absence.

We have been diminished by death. Some of us may still have living children. Other parents have no children left. They have lost an only child, perhaps. Or all of their children died. And here we are, grateful for the warmth of summer mornings, aware of the ripe beauty of nature, trying to deal with our children's absence with all the grace of which we are capable. Often we do not want to burden others with our grief. Or we may be convinced that others don't wish to share our distress. We have learned, after all, that the world around us is not always able to understand how we feel.

Besides, we were taught to be brave. Many of us will do everything we can to appear "normal" after our loss. But we were also taught to be honest. And when you feel the hurt, when you seem almost to be lost in the shadows of this golden summertime, don't hide your sorrow. The grief of your spirit can perhaps be kept a secret on the outside. Yet, your deepest feelings, unexpressed, can burn into your existence with harmful force.

You can be both brave and honest. You know that it's brave to share grief, be it old grief or new grief. And revealing that sorrow is also honest. Of course, nothing can wipe away much of your pain, but sharing grief is helpful. You will know that after you have expressed the painful sorrow you once kept hidden, and you find yourself, finally, smiling at the memories and the blessings of past summer times.

Sascha Wagner

The Music Will Play Again

It seems everyone in the Heavilin family is musical. My husband Glen has been playing the trumpet since he was five years old when he participated in various community bands with his father. Our sons Nathan and Matthew both started playing the trumpet while they were in early elementary school.

We have fond memories of our boys playing in ensemble with their dad and grandpa on the rare occasions when we were all together since Grandpa Heavilin lives in Indiana and we live in California.



At the family reunions, much of the time was spent with the entire group, which often numbered over 100, joining in singing favorite hymns. Our immediate family often sang specials at our local church.

When our older teens played in the high school marching band, Nathan, then nine or ten, marched as the mascot for the band. When we visited our oldest son Matthew at college, it was not unusual for his little brother Nathan to sit in the band with him at basketball games.

When Nathan was in high school he played in the concert band, the jazz band, the pep band, and sang in the concert choir, barbershop quartet, and special ensemble. Our lives were filled with music.

On February 10, 1983 the music in our family stopped suddenly when Nathan was killed in a car crash caused by a drunk driver. The trumpets lay silent; the hymn books were closed. I wondered if I would ever hear music in my house again.

Eventually we were able to sing hymns at church with only a few tears. Our son Matthew has even sung some specials with his wife at church, and Mom Heavilin has managed to sit and listen although I've gone through many tissues in the process.

It took longer for the trumpets to be retrieved from the closet. Nathan had been gone seven years when his dad finally tried to blow a few notes. After assuring himself that he could still play, he decided to join the Fourth of July Band, a volunteer group that plays in the park for all the Fourth of July functions in our city each year.

I'm sitting in the park writing this on my laptop computer while I'm listening to Glen rehearse with the band. This is his fourth year to participate with this group. The first year was really hard for all of us. While Glen practiced, I spent my time calling all of our friends and inviting them to come and support Glen in this very significant performance. Now we have established a tradition. While Glen plays in the band, I entertain our many guests. We talk, we laugh, and we remember.

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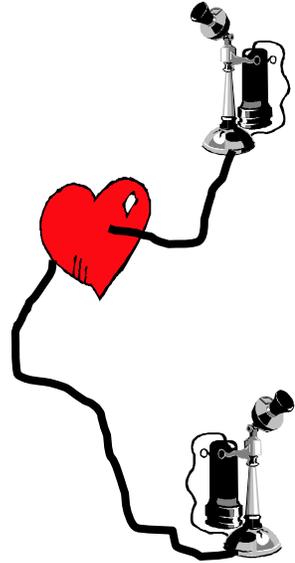
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

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

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942.
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Judith Cherrington,...**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer,(508)473-4087
- Gloria Rabinowitz.....**Gianna Rose Therese**, Still Born.....(774)287-6497
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan C. Plunkett**, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

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SEASONS

We have music in our house again, but we recognize it will never be the same. Before we played and sang “with” Nate. Now we play and sing “because of” and “for” Nate. When my husband started playing the trumpet again, he gave himself an added incentive. He uses Nathan’s trumpet. He is not playing only for himself. He is playing for his son Nathan.

There is music at our house again. The notes are deeper, filled with emotion, but in time it is possible to sing (and play) again.

Marilyn Heavilin
TCF, Redlands, CA

In Memory of my son, Nathan



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

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

- Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian’s Dad)**
- Linda Teres (Russell’s Mom)**
- Rick Dugan (Larry’s Dad)**
- Janice Parmenter (Tyler’s Mom)**
- Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe’s Mom)**



The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again.

We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the “black pit” and never have the strength or courage to crawl out, because crawl out we must, on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives, including ourselves, for we are different now.

We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must move forward. If we don’t, we stay stuck at the point that our world changed. I used to say “ended.”

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again – and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again – or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.

Renée Little
TCF, Fort Collins, CO



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Relationships Do Change

Does it seem to you as if relationships with your family and friends have changed since the death of your child or sibling? You are not alone. In her book "When the Bough Breaks," Judith Bernstein selects these expressive quotations from other writers' works to introduce the chapters on "Family Relationships" and "Social Relationships," respectively:

"Death of a child member becomes an important identifying piece of information about the family. It is woven into its history and into the everyday operation of members' lives. The child who has died continues to be a family member after death. Parents are forever parents of a dead child as well as of the surviving children. The dead child lives in memory. The family grieves for him and remembers him with little comfort and support from the society around them."

Joan H. Arnold and Penelope B. Gemma
A Child Dies: A Portrait of Family Grief

When people outside the immediate family are encountered who do not allow ... expressions of emotions and thoughts about deceased children, it creates a resentment that is difficult to control. Subsequently, the time comes when parents begin to separate themselves from insensitive and uncaring people in their environments who insist on keeping channels of communication closed.

Many times a wedge is driven between those suffering the loss and very dear and close friends. We can refer to this as a "wedge of ignorance"—ignorance about the great importance of open communication.

Ronald J. Knapp,
Beyond Endurance

A Bit Richer

I've heard it said that what you get out of a book depends not on what the book brings to you, but on what you bring to the book.

It's hard to fathom, much less accept, that we can gain anything by losing a child. Once the black hole has been created, we can't imagine that any light will ever enter it. But, in time, tender mercies start to trickle in. If we keep our eyes and hearts open, we do gain a more insightful view of life. We see and feel things at a deeper level than others can even imagine.

I find as a speaker and writer, when I quote books and use examples from movies to help illustrate or clarify my feelings about bereaved parenthood, or more often, life in general, people will say, "I don't remember reading that." "I didn't get that out of it." "I never made that connection."

Little Women, Pay It Forward, Gladiator, Lost in Yonkers, and yes, the classic *Gone with the Wind* are just a few of the books and movies that portray the depths of life as WE know it while others merely read words or watch actors on a screen.

I don't like being where I am. I certainly would never choose to be here. But as I go back to favorite books and movies, I find comfort not only in the familiar, but also in the farther-reaching themes that I didn't see before.

Revisiting books and movies will never make up for the loss of my son, but it can make my life a bit richer. And as long as I'm still alive, I'm going to grab whatever I can get.

Susan Larson
TCF, Atlanta, GA

Journaling to Heal

Each time I look back over my grief journey, I remember the important role that journaling played in my first and second years of grief. Handwritten entries, some sentences, sometimes just a few words describing my emotions, helped me to define where I was in my daily life. As I review the tear-stained pages, I am reminded of the deep, deep pain and the catharsis of the journal. Whether I was angry, in pain, deeply depressed or just too exhausted to think, I wrote a few words, maybe even a few lines each day. I saw it as my connection to my son.



As time progressed, my journaling became writing and eventually I returned to the computer and began forming coherent thoughts and sentences, with subjects and messages to my child, myself and to others. But the process started with the healing of the journal. I learned to be very honest with myself in my journal because I never shared it with anyone. I didn't put on a mask or rationalize in my journal, as no one else would be reading it. I was completely candid, and I soon recognized my weaknesses, regrets, strengths and successes. Pure honesty and great insight were achieved in my journal's conversation with myself.

Grief therapists recommend journaling to bereaved parents quite frequently. Some people are able to find an outlet for their daily roller coaster of emotions through journaling. Some seek answers and others seek questions. Many parents feel they are connecting with their child through their journal. There are as many reasons to journal as there are types of journals.

(continued on page 11)



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



(continued from page 8)

While journaling may not be for everyone, we encourage each of you to at least attempt it for a week. Give it your best effort. If, as some have found, it offers you nothing and is a chore, not a treasured time, then stop and seek other forms of outlet. But if, as many have found, it offers you a place for your thoughts, your messages, your self-revelation and self-evaluation as well as a refuge from the world, then by all means, continue to journal.

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

RITUALS

I don't know why rituals help us heal, but often they do. One day, less than a year after Philip had died, a friend and I met on a private beach in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The beach was special to both of us, because the mother she had lost and the son I had lost had both spent wonderfully happy hours on it.

We didn't quite know how to do a ritual so we made one up. We each gathered a large handful of stones, and then we sat down on the sandy beach with our stones by our sides, facing one another. Each of us in turn placed a stone down on the sand, and as we did so, we shared something about the loved one we had lost. Our anecdotes ran the gamut from happy and funny to sad and longing. We laughed, and we cried. Gradually the stones formed a circle, and we then placed the two remaining stones in its center, in honor of Philip and her mom. We stood up, hugged, and went to have lunch at a favorite place nearby. There we shared photographs and more memories. By the time we parted, we both knew her mom and my son were happily alive in both our memories. And we felt wonderful for having celebrated their lives together.



After I moved to California, I met my dear friend Nell at the first TCF Marin meeting I attended. And ever since, on the birthdays of our sons and on the day they each died, Nell and I have gathered at a special beach to do our own ritual, similar to the first but unique to us. We like to toss flowers into the ocean in honor of John and Philip. Nell often brings something to read, which I like and will do in the future, too. We, too, laugh and cry. We often, but not always, do the circle of stones. I love that I'm getting to know her John, and that she is becoming acquainted with my Philip. Though our two beloved

I encourage you to do whatever rituals are helpful and easy for you. Feel free to borrow ours. May whatever you do to celebrate and remember your child's touch and bring ease to your heart.

Catharine (Kitty) Reeve
TCF Marin and San Francisco Chapters CA
In Memory of my son, Philip

That Anniversary

All our lives we've known about anniversaries. Our parents celebrated their Anniversary. The school we attended marked its Anniversary. The company honored your Anniversary when you started your career. The Lions Club held a gala to remember its Anniversary. But there is one Anniversary that we're never eager to recall. It's That Anniversary.

When a child dies we retain vivid memories of that fateful day. Time cannot rob us of the memory and the grief of that awful and confusingly sad day. Unlike your wedding date or your first day on the job or when you graduated from school, which may have become hazy over time, the circumstances and ticks of the clock of **That Anniversary** remain etched in our minds.

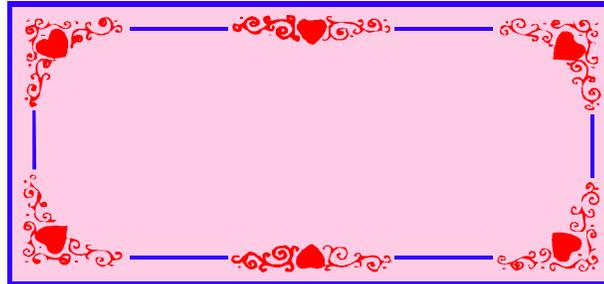
Some of us do special "things" on **That Anniversary**. We pray. We cry. We grieve. Some make an effort to try to distract the intense sadness that **That Anniversary** brings. Some walk on the beach or take a ride in the country. We look at old photos or other memorabilia to remember and to ward off anything that might cloud the memory of our daughters and sons.

Friends and relatives also remember **That Anniversary** and may send a card or ask you out to lunch or choose not to visit you showing respect for your need for solitude. Regardless of how you deal with **That Anniversary**, you cannot avoid it. Sometimes even the days leading up to **That Anniversary** bring apprehension and uneasiness. That's OK. **That Anniversary** will always come (and go) as will the days before and after, too.

The Compassionate Friends understands that on **That Anniversary**, as when it occurred, your heart is heavy yet empty at the same time. It can be a confusing time. There may be guilt or remorse or simply confusion. But it is up to you to sort it out and move ahead because after **That Anniversary** there will be another and another. Surely your heart may not feel as heavy or as empty as time passes, but **That Anniversary** will always be there. How you face it, how you mark it, how you remember it and how you caress it is the key to moving forward and conditioning yourself for the next time **That Anniversary** occurs.

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