



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.

November - December 2018



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Vol. 23 Issue 6

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:

November 20th & December 9th (Special)

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last Monday or earlier if you plan to attend.**

Directions....On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.

Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left. Bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.

November 27th & December (No Meeting)

WHO ARE WE?

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

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

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

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

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2018

Weather Cancellation

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

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



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

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

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

*Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

*Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
Linda Teres 508/366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt 508/881-2111
Carol Cotter 774/219-7774
Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

The chapter address is:

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

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator

Dennis Gravelle
638 Pleasant St.
Leominster, Ma. 01453-6222
Phone (978) 537-2736
dgtcf@aol.com

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

The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
Fax (630) 990-0246
Web Page:
www.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, support our outreach program, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

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

Love Gifts

Mrs Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter **Monica Michelle Curran**. "Always missed and always loved", on her anniversary September 12th. Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldredge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldredge** on his birthday November 14th.

Chapter News

Just a heads up, our chapter is planning a candlelight Ceremony again this year and a social event on December 9th, in place of our regular meeting on the third Tuesday of the month. Judy Daubney did such a great job last year that she has volunteered to chair the committee. They have selected "Prezo Grille & Bar" in Milford. A buffet menu consisting of Chicken Marsala, Baked Haddock and Grilled Beef Tips Italiano. Side dishes will be Roasted Potatoes and Garden Salad. Will also include Bread/Butter, Coffee/Tea and Ice Cream for dessert. The price will be \$30.00 p/p. There will be a cut-off date of November 25th. All checks are to be made out to "TCF Metrowest". Any questions, please call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239. I know it's hard to plan so far ahead but we would love to make this an annual event so please give it some thought.





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, November and December. 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

November

ALAN R. STUCHINS
ERICA BLEAKNEY
SAMUEL O'DAFE OTOBO
SEAN P. COTTER
CHRISTOPHER J. LOUGHREN
BENJAMIN ARTHUR MOUL
CYNTHIA ZOTTOLI
DENNIS HENNIGAN
ANDREA RENEE BOSWORTH
MANUEL (MANNY) PENICHE
AUSTIN MILES CASWELL
RACHEL O'DETTE
RALPH RICHARD RUSSO

December

LARRY DUGAN
STEVEN GRILLO
AARON STEVEN GRAY
JAMES S. CARPENTER VI
TIMOTHY M. ANDERSON
HEIDI ANN RICHER
OLIVIA MARIE CATRINA
KEVIN HOLLAND
JOELLE M. SHAVER
MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER BERKS

Birthdays

November

OLIVIA BERGSTROM
JOHN GARVEY
DIXON BERGMAN
JASON SCOTT RAKITIN
KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
ALICIA D. JACKMAN
JONATHAN BRET LOVEJOY
DANIEL L. PHIPPS
CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK

December

JENNIFER T. GARDNER
LISA RANDALL
MARC R. PEARLMAN
BRETT COHEN
KEVIN S. JOHNSON
JAMES S. CARPENTER VI
EVAN GEORGE REA

My apologies to Mr. & Mrs. Brian Donovan
for omitting their sons name,
Andrew Joseph Donovan on his
Anniversary in the July/August issue





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.

LITTLE PRINCESS

*(This was written as he wrote it with the spelling errors.)
Lovingly lifted from "Words Of Sorrow Words of Love
The Death of a Child", edited by Eva Lager*

Once we had a little prinsess named Sophie I loved her and every night I said "Good night prinsess" and the werst thing hapend May the 7th she died that day I was so sad that no one could come near me I cried it was that sad but Sophie you will never come out of my hart.

**Robert Lester-Smith (7), Brother of Sophie
Brooke Lester-Smith, 7/14/89 – 5/7/93**

Surviving My Sister's Suicide

By Monique Giard

As a survivor of my sister's suicide, what became clear to me is the importance of telling one's story as part of the grieving process. This process is too often shrouded by stigma and silenced by shame. I write this article with the hope that by sharing my story and talking about suicide openly, you might learn a little bit more about suicide, which might help you assist someone in distress and guide you to save their life.

As a survivor, I often felt isolated and weakened by a strong stigma. After the suicide death of my sister in 1994, she was then 49, I would have liked to be able to speak about it openly with my siblings as I was attempting to reclaim the "truth." It took almost 10 years for that healing process to complete itself.



During my recovery, I learned that survivors who feel strong and safe enough to break the silence and openly tell friends, family and colleagues that a loved one died by suicide, not only helps their own bereavement process, but also contributes to more understanding and knowledge of the phenomenon, instead of maintaining the myths that grow in silence and denial. Suicide is surrounded by myth.

One myth is the belief that suicide is the result of a single precipitating factor as opposed to being a complex psychosocial issue. Another myth is the belief that suicidal ideation is the result of mental illness. Although that can be true, it would be irresponsibly simplistic to think that way.

Research is discovering the link between bullying and suicide called "bullycide". Suicide survivors, like myself often struggle for many years, to find reasons why someone would even consider death by suicide. What other options were available? What if one of these other options had been considered? All these questions make the grieving process last even longer. However long the process, this search for meaning, safe sharing with others and time, helps diminish the suffering. It was when I heard other people's stories, knowing that it was not their fault, that guilt over my sister's suicide started to go away.

After my sister's death, I became obsessed with finding the causes of her despair, forgetting my own grief. Thus also began my journey into the world of suicide prevention, becoming a counselor specializing in it.

It seems that only other survivors can truly know the depth of despair experienced. Peer support is invaluable in the healing process of families dealing with the suicide loss of a loved one.

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I felt a lot of compassion, love and non-judgmental listening from the bereavement support group as I spoke of the loss of my sister Louise. Shamed, blamed or embarrassed may also be why survivors might avoid seeking help altogether.

Stigma also persists when a parent has to choose to tell or not tell children who have lost a close relative or friend to suicide. Parents may want to protect their child from the pain, however, similar to talking to children about sex, my advice to parents is to never lie to a child. That doesn't mean telling descriptively all the details of a suicide but using one's judgment in explaining what happened.

I remember feeling isolated and guilty for not having prevented my sister's death one way or another (irrational feeling of failed responsibility).

Guilt combined with incomprehension is what I think makes suicide different from any other death. It's very hard to make any sense of it. All the Whys? and What ifs? that you can think of remain with you for such a long time.

As I read the second last chapter of Carla Fine's testimonial book, *Forgiving Them/Forgiving Ourselves*, I find myself sitting outside at my friend's beautiful house in Lions Bay, overlooking the ocean and mountains, enjoying a late sunny and warm afternoon, surrounded by the smell of cedar trees. Peacefully and inspired by Carla's writing, I reflect on my closing words for this article.

Even though I would have liked to believe that, through love, we could keep the people we care about alive, I know we can't and forgive myself for that. My closure on my sister's suicide would not be complete without also forgiving her for leaving this world the way she did.

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*)



Some Suggestions for Thanksgiving

Throughout our lives, expectations of things to come are based upon past experiences. If, in the past, you had set a glorious table and were the perfect host or hostess, it is very possible that friends and family will expect more of the same this year. They may not be aware that you are not looking toward the holidays with a fun and games attitude. They probably do not know that in anticipation of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, you may feel anxiety and fear. They are probably thinking this year will be different and some sadness will accompany it, but I don't think they are aware of your anguish, especially if it's been "awhile."

I would like to suggest to you that in fairness to yourself you need to be honest about your feelings and, just as important, you need to communicate these feelings to those around you. I really don't think it is necessary for you to believe that because you set a tradition and always made the turkey, fried the latkes, and always had the family over, you need to feel obligated to do it again this year. Perhaps you would like to tell everyone:

- * Someone else will have to do dinner this year.
- * You want to make dinner in your home, but you need lots of help because you don't have the energy to do it.
- * You want to go to the parties, but you are afraid you may break down and cry and you want them to know in advance this is really okay.
- * You want to tell them it's okay to talk about your child. Not to, makes it very uncomfortable.

The list goes on, but the point is that to pretend everything is "just fine" is a lie, and that's not fair to you or to the people who you love.

**Diane Zarnkoff
TCF, Simi Valley, CA**

Tradition, Tradition, Tradition

Even in normal times, tradition isn't what it is always cracked up to be, and sometimes "tradition" gets in the way of sanity. Often we cling to tradition because it's easier, we don't want to offend others, we don't want to be embarrassed, or we don't know what else to do. When you are a grieving parent, giving in to tradition can drive you over the edge.

I found myself in the "tradition predicament" regarding putting up a tree the first Christmas holiday after my son Chad died. I didn't want, need, or have the energy to put up a tree. Yet other family members wanted a tree and they wanted it as it always had been, big, bright, and decorated with ornaments they had purchased or made through the years.

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What eventually took place, with regard to a tree, changed our holiday forever and it has been a good thing for everyone involved.

I don't know the exact circumstances of how our "new tradition" came into being that first year. But I do remember frustration, tears, and upset people. I also remember my daughter saying to me it was her Christmas too and she needed a tree. It was her older brother, the one she remembered getting up with every Christmas morning when she was little that was dead, and she had to have something so she could deal with the emptiness. So she came up with a plan. She and her father would go find a tree and she would take care of the decorations all by herself.

That was ten Christmases ago and this year, once again, my husband and my daughter will leave early in the morning, a week before Christmas, and hunt for a tree, just the two of them. When they come home, I will prepare breakfast, while they get the tree in the holder, and move the furniture. We will sit down together and enjoy our meal and then my husband and I will leave for several hours. During that time we will do whatever we feel like doing. We have gone to the cemetery, gone for walks, gone to the bookstore, visited friends, etc. When we return, my daughter will have decorated our Christmas tree, and the whole house!

Every year the tree has been different, limited only to my daughter's imagination and the budget we keep her on. She didn't use our regular ornaments for a while and when she did, she told me ahead of time and said how meaningful it was for her to be the one who put Chad's ornaments back on the tree. We have continued this "new tradition" to this day. Now, I find angel ornaments to put on the tree to honor our missing angel, and enjoy with my husband, sons, and family, my daughter's traditional tribute to her brother. This "changing tradition" has been so healing. Our family has had the brightness and beauty that a lighted tree can provide, and I have been able to save my energy for other things I wanted to do.

During the next few weeks, I hope you will make the activities of the season as stress free as you can. I hope that you will feel free to experiment with new traditions, knowing there is no "right way" to go through this season, only "your way." I hope that you will remember Christmas is only one day and that the time leading up to that "one day" will probably be more difficult than the actual day. And finally, I hope for peace in your hearts, if not today then tomorrow, or the tomorrow after, or the tomorrow after that.

**Sue Anderson
TCF, South Bend, IN
In Memory of my son, Chad**



Other Area TCF Chapters

MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)

Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu (508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net

South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)
Chapter Leader: Mercedes Kearney (781) 749-3401..... mdkearney@comcast.net

Worcester Chapter
Chapter Co-Leaders: Lisa Holbrook (774) 482-6066....sixholes@charter.net

Mary Vautier.... (508) 393-7348....mjvautier@msn.com

Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole (781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com



Holiday Healing

It's been almost two years now, another holiday season rolls around. The second Thanksgiving without you is this week. It's just a stupid day, a day where people eat Turkey and watch football why should I care?

There is no one to visit me this year; there is no one here who cares. The numbness is creeping in. The pain so deep, I can't breathe, I can't think, I can't stand it. All day long I think of you, but why? Why is today any different than any other day?

Is it holiday traditions lost? Is it knowing millions of parents everywhere will be with their children this week but I won't be with you? Is it remembering the closeness and laughter on this day throughout the years? Why do the tears fill my eyes and my heart hurt so?

Maybe somewhere deep down inside I am asking myself what am I thankful for and this question is so very hard since you are gone. When someone first told me to be thankful for the years I spent with you or to be thankful I had you in my life I wanted to punch them and scream leave me alone you don't understand!

But now I understand because I am eternally grateful for those years. Today almost two years since you left this place, my second Thanksgiving without you here I am thankful for all the love we shared. I am thankful for the gift of Motherhood you each gave me, the greatest gift of all.



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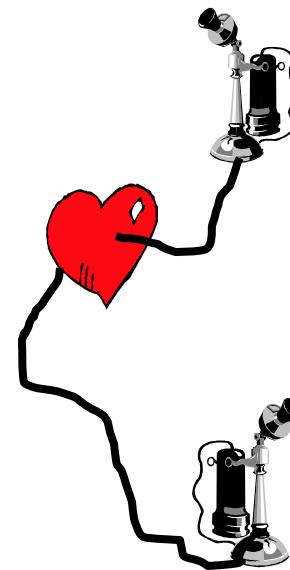


Phone Friends

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

Ed & Joan Motuzas,**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942
Linda Teres,**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt,**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,(508)881-2111
Sandra Richiazz-Natoli...**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,(508)877-8106
Sarah Commerford.....**Timothy, age 21**, Homicide.....(508)429-9230

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



Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx

- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at www.compassiontefriends.org
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

Other Grief Support Websites

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



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On the good days now, with two years since you left this place there are more good days than not, but on the good days, I can't begin to count how many things I am thankful for. But if I had to pick just one thing on Thursday as I say my prayers, I would have to say I am most grateful for each day I spend with both of you tucked safely in my heart!

Deana L. Martin

**In Memory of my children, Amanda Suzanne
Mills and Logan Robert Mills**

Chanukah Then and Now

Chanukah Then

Chanukah was always a special and joyous holiday in our home. Peter, Carol, Linda, and I gathered around the dining room table, lit three menorahs, and sang the blessings. We had a repertoire of songs and we took turns choosing the song we would sing next. We especially enjoyed teasing Peter with one song that added a verse each night. At least once during the holidays, we had potato latkes (pancakes) which Linda loved.

Sometimes when the girls were at college, they would call and we would sing the blessings long distance.

We usually had at least one party with extended family and friends celebrating our heritage and our connectedness.



Chanukah Now

I light one menorah in the kitchen. If Carol is home, she joins me, but Peter chooses not to participate. The tears no longer stream down my face as they did the first year, but my voice quavers as I sing the familiar words.

There are no latkes just as there aren't some of her other favorites on other days.

I have guests on other occasions, but there are no Chanukah parties. Although Chanukah brings little happiness at this time, perhaps there will be joy and laughter in the future. But for now, I'm doing what is right for me and coping as well as I can.



Stephanie Hesse
TCF, Rockland County, NY
In Memory of Linda

Looking for Your Gift

Bereaved families often face the holidays with fear and trepidation. Just the fact, holidays continue to go on, can cause outrage. Our sadness is monumental, and causes our bodies to resist moving on. We need to be gentle with ourselves; we are going through an emotional rehabilitation. Holidays often renew our grief, even if we are a distance from fresh grief.

We need to selectively choose what traditions are important to our family. If we over commit, we set ourselves up for a let down when we cannot meet our goals. If you have some traditions that are very important and you are not physically up to doing them, you will find friends and extended family will feel honored if you ask for their help. Most people want to help you get through the holidays, but don't know what to do. Give them the opportunity to feel they are helpful in your healing.

Grieving cannot be put on the shelf until the holidays are over. We need to take time to feel our grief, and express our sadness. We also need to take time to try and put a bit of normality in our lives. We must remember it is not disrespectful to laugh. I'm sure our loved one would want us to surround ourselves with caring people who can help us through the holidays. A caring supportive person is one who encourages us to be the best we can be, not one who expects us to be as we used to be.

Our healing will eventually cause our pain to move out and make room for our loved ones memories. We learn to make a new life for ourselves. Holidays get better and we learn how to live again.

We tend to think of life's richest moments as being the joyous, fun filled, carefree days prior to losing our children and siblings. But, as I search for the most meaningful things that have given me strength and a real appreciation for life, they certainly do include the pain, overcoming my despair, losing my son, grandson, and six siblings. We cherish the friendships that don't always demand a smiling face, and those with the warm touch that says, "share your pain, let me be a part of your grief, don't worry about making us uneasy with tears, we have all been there." Much healing can take place through sharing as we learn to be very honest and courageous with our feelings, which helps us to find hope. Hope helps to restore our love for life, and gives us the strength to survive.

This holiday we will all miss our loved ones, who are no longer with us. Though it has been through much pain, you probably have never been so close to your child or sibling, or shared such a large part of your life with them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent) (professional)

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

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

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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

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

Fold & Tape _____

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

Fold & Tape _____

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We hope the memories that ache with pain, can also bring you thoughts of love. For those of us who are further removed from our early grief, who can look back and appreciate the strength of our struggle, the compassion from seeing others' pain, wanting to become functional human beings again so we can contribute to making a better world, are gifts our children and siblings have given to us for our survival. These gifts are greater than any fancy bow tied box can contain. Look for your gifts and cherish them.

*Marie Hofmockel
TCF, Valley Forge, PA*

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so... we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly?

Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes,
LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

Darcie D. Sims

After 15 Years

I often hear, "Why do you still go to Compassionate Friends, why are you still involved with that group, it has been 15 years after all, aren't you beyond that now?"

I no longer judge these people, I forgive them, for they simply cannot understand, in the multitude of ways, how The Compassionate Friends has helped me to heal, and continues to help.

I remember after Danny died wondering how I would live one minute, one hour, one day without him. Where would my next breath come from? I would see others at the meetings beyond five years and say, that won't be me, I can't live that long without my son. But I did. And I did it with the help of TCF. They gave me hope.

The people who attended the meetings were authentic, freely and openly sharing their feelings and I knew it was a place I could share Danny and share my inner turmoil and fears without judgment.

Fifteen years later I can say that my grief has changed. I equate my grief to a pendulum—as my Danny said, "life is a pendulum." My grief pendulum no longer swings violently left and right without rhythm. My pendulum for the most has a soft rhythmic swing. Certainly, there are times when a memory or reflection of what was and what will never be enters my thoughts and the pendulum swings without care.

But, there is one thing I have learned that is true, it passes. My grief pendulum will return to a soft rhythmic swing once again. What does not pass, is the light and love between mother and son. I hold on dearly to that truth when the chaos comes, yes after 15 years there are still times of chaos. I know it will be this way for the rest of my life. Grief will always be my constant companion, as will the love I have for my son.

I am able to find moments and times of joy and happiness, sometimes bittersweet, but the times are there. I value and appreciate and enjoy them at a much deeper level today. At first I was afraid to love again, for fear of being hurt, but today, I love more deeply.

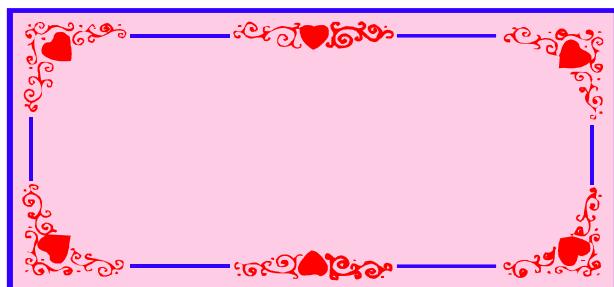
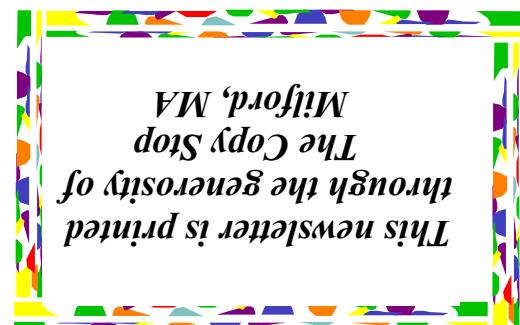
May your grief pendulum swing a soft, rhythmic swing, and may you always remember the love and light never goes away.

*Carol Moss
TCF, Reno, NV
In Memory of my son, Danny Harper*



On the second Sunday in December, The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Address Correction Requested



The Compassionate Friends
MetroWest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Miford, MA 01757-1265