



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.

September - October 2023

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:00 to 8:30 pm in the conference room at the Milford Senior Center at 60 North Bow St. Milford Ma.

Sept. 19th & Oct. 17th.

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.

Sept. 26th. & Oct. 31st.

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. ©2023

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents, grandparents 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 before 6:00 p.m. at (508) 473-4239

(If school is closed in Milford, because of weather, then all meetings will be cancelled at the Senior Center & Parish Center.)



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

* Mitchell Greenblatt 857/225-7135

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

* Judy Daubney 508/529-6942

Newsletter

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

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

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.

Mr. Donald Dilorenzo in loving memory of his son **Christopher D. Dilorenzo**. "Always missed forever loved".

Mr. Paul Stack in loving memory of his son **John W. Stack** on his anniversary July 9th. "Every day is One day closer to you".

Mrs. Nancy McAllister in loving memory of her son **Michael Joseph McAllister** on his anniversary August 18th. "Always missed forever loved".

Chapter Notes

Mark your calendars, December 10th. is the date that we will be having our annual Compassionate Friends Candle light Ceremony. Our Steering Committee is working to find a suitable site for this annual function in the Milford area..

A Grandmother Report.

Dear Sheril,

4 years ago today our Dear Lord brought you "home". As I've said again and again, our only consolation of losing you is that you are no longer in pain.

Alex continually wants to look at your baby pictures and all the albums that have his Mom in them as well as your Facebook page. You would be so proud of him Sheril.

He is growing into quite an amazing young man. But then again, I know you are watching from above. I just wish there were stairs leading up to heaven so we could visit!

We love and miss you terribly.

ONE DAY CLOSER MY GIRL

Diane Sears
Metrowest Chapter, T.C.F, Milford MA.



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, September and October 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

September

RYAN C. ANDERSON
MONICA MICHELLE CURRAN
ERIC MACDONALD
LAUREN MARY TOLOCZKO
GREG BRUNO
MICHAEL VINCENT TYNAN
ADAM MICHAEL MAHONEY

October

ANTHONY JOSSEPH KROW
ELIZA JULIET NORTON
DAVID A. SCHNEGG
JESSICA L. HALLIDAY
ISAAC QUINN BASTIAN
MARC R. PEARLMAN
CLIFFORD CROWE

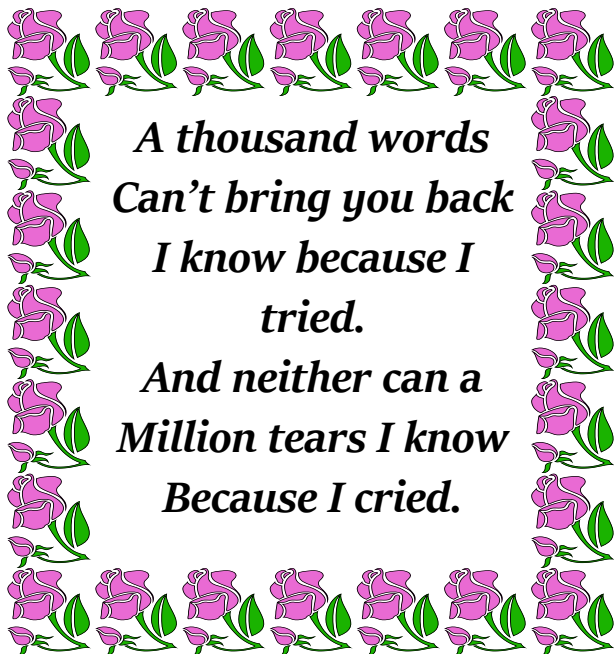
Birthdays

September

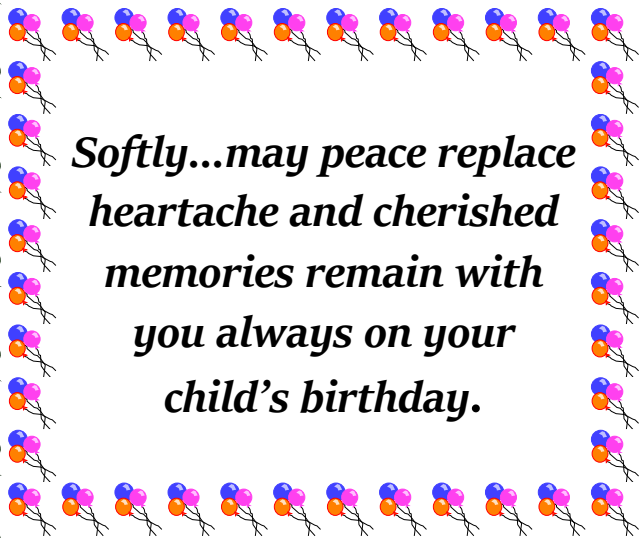
TYLER PARMENTER
SAMUEL O'DEFE OTOBO
WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
RUSSELL J. TERES
JOSHUA JAMES NOREAU
ADAM J. BUCHINSKI
AARON STEVEN GRAY
ADAM MICHAEL MAHONEY

October

KYLE E. KOMARNICKI
COREY S. VAUTIER
DENNIS M. HENNIGAN
SHANNON A. McTIERNAN
MICHAEL J. HAVER7
JESSICA L. HALLIDAY
TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN
KATELYN ASHLEY TOSI



*A thousand words
Can't bring you back
I know because I
tried.
And neither can a
Million tears I know
Because I cried.*



*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.

A Sibling Dies

by © L. Nicole Dean

For Don

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

They find me. It's not like I didn't have therapy. I've had dance therapy, art therapy, regular therapy, travel therapy, friendship therapy, biofeedback/hypnosis therapy, creampuff therapy, swimming therapy, forgiveness therapy, spiritual community therapy, law school therapy... law school therapy? The fun had to end somewhere. Seriously, losing a sibling is heart wrenching and no laughing matter. It took me ten or fifteen years to truly laugh again, let alone make light of myself. That just happened this year. No doubt, because I am writing of it, rather than speaking of it, which I rarely do. It feels safer to write. Other than to therapists, I've spoken of his death to three people iWho could understand, I felt, and why diminish his being or expose myself? I adored my brother Don - he made me laugh like a monkey. I adore both my brothers; as a child they were my world. Not very healthy perhaps, but it worked for me. Home life was chaotic and quite frightening because my father was more than a little nuts. My mother's energy was spent containing his insanity and keeping our bodies and souls together. She was part steel, part angora. We never spoke of Don after his death. The community ostracized us; my father took a trip down devil's lane, and my mother mourned my brother until the day she died. I'm sad to say that we never had Don's picture in our home again, because the pain was too severe. It seems we could not get past it. We went to our separate corners and quietly mourned. It was different years ago; so much remained hidden. Self-healing groups were non-existent, shrinks were stigmas, and the Catholic Church unforgiving. I couldn't save him. I was the last person he talked with on Christmas Eve. For months, I barely spoke and relived the shock daily. I ate a lot. Death by mashed potatoes. That was sure to bring him back. I retreated into a private world for several years where if I wasn't dead, I'd sure like to be. This is grief.



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And it does soften over time. It softens like water softens rock, in its flowing, gentle, rushing, mysterious way. It softens like a sweet whisper of a memory that lulls you to sleep, knowing that love knits the bones of despair together, tighter, stronger, more curious, more delicious than ever before. Knowing that the fires of your being burn the dross of despair. Knowing that the chamber of the heart is strong beyond measure and can take it and transform the pain into joy. Joy for having known this person, for a day or ten years or two months. Joy for having the courage to be. For knowing yourself in many garments. For taking a risk to love anyone again: a neighbor, a friend, a cat, a lover, a stranger, yourself. The broken heart opens and mends itself. In the middle of the night, when no one is there but many are listening. Joy seeps into me. After all, I'm entitled. I'm a survivor.

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For Bereaved Couples, Grief and Intimacy

By Paul C. Rosenblatt, Ph.D.

During my interviews with bereaved parents, I've heard most say that the death of a child changes everything. So of course it's no surprise that many report changes in their sexual relationship after their child dies. These changes might be brief or might last for months, even years. But as with other aspects of the grieving process, it can help couples to know what other bereaved men and women have to say about their experience. Grief has profound effects on a couple. One or both partners may feel fatigued or low in energy. One or both may feel too depressed to care or to have the motivation to do anything, let alone something that requires as much energy as a sexual relationship. Some feel numb in ways that make it impossible to get interested. Some say they feel too fragile, breakable, easily injured, or unconfident.

Rosa: It basically killed sex. That part of our relationship died and it's still not back to where I'd like it to be. Part of it was your grieving. It was really hard to get you excited [laughs] about anything for a long time. And if I pushed or tried to seduce, it made you run away.

Some parents describe a feeling of "this is how we made our child," that makes intercourse feel inappropriate, uncomfortable, painful, even repulsive.

Bruce: We went without contact for months. Even the physical act became frightening and nauseating to me. It was such a gruesome experience for both of us.

I don't recall exactly when we did resume. My guess is probably six, seven months following his death we started having intercourse. But all the time we weren't, we were very much in love, hugging and touching.

For some the child's death makes relations a sacred act, so sacred they hesitate to approach one another.

Glenda: For a long time it was like, That's how we got him. Get away! I couldn't. Remember how I cried? [Ken: Ooh, yeah.] I think more for me it was very painful emotionally for a while. [Ken: Yeah.] It was like, We created him this way; we can't do this.

Some bereaved parents are afraid that they might become pregnant; they feel too vulnerable to risk making and possibly losing another child. Or they feel they have nothing to give; they don't have the necessary energy or the capacity to focus on a baby

Amy: Even though I knew it was hard to get pregnant, I did not want to get pregnant again right away. There was no way. Whatever birth control we were using at that time, you can't make a mistake. I didn't feel like I needed to [take the risk].

For a lot of bereaved parents, intercourse seems wrong or strange because it is pleasurable and in their grief, pleasure seems wrong, maybe even sinful.

Some grieving parents feel too distant, angry, upset, or frustrated with their partner to want to be intimate: How can I be close with him when he's so unsupportive? When she's not grieving the way I think she should grieve? When he's partly responsible for the death? When . . .

In other couples, one or both take an antidepressant that suppresses sexuality. In a few couples, the gap in relations is linked to problems in communication, trust, or mutual respect that were there all along but were magnified by the death. For those couples, staying together may require competent professional help.

Hannah: Things come to the surface that you wouldn't think about, unless something happened. Our marital problems have always been there, but they're more on the surface because of what we've been through. I don't know what's going to happen. It's kind of a shame to throw away 30 years. The problems that we are having have always [Fred: Yeah.] been there. We just never dealt with them before.

Living with a Change

From the beginning, or after a while, at least one partner wants to return to something like normal marital relations. Some partners try to seduce their spouse. But seduction doesn't necessarily work. From another perspective, grieving couples have to deal with all sorts of differences, so it's no surprise that they might have to deal with differences in interest in sexuality. One basis for the disparity might be individual preferences in what each finds comforting. For some, maybe men more than women, intercourse is comforting, and in their grief they ache for that comfort.



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In couples for whom conceiving a baby is still possible, one partner, usually the woman more than the man, might want to try to become pregnant. But her desire to make a baby or her uncharacteristic sexual aggressiveness may put off her partner, who may then resist her advances.

Tina. I think initially we were very close emotionally and sexually. As we moved a little bit further out from it, and then there was talk of being pregnant, it was like he thought the only reason I wanted to have sex was so I could get pregnant. And there was a lot of tension about that, a lot of fights. If he thought that we were going to be close to being sexual, it was, like he'd do everything in his power not to do anything. I remember, going through my mind, "That's it! We're done! I'm divorced! I'm leaving' him!"

Expressing Closeness

For some bereaved couples, touching, hugging, and cuddling continue. They can feel loved and the comfort of skin-to-skin contact without going further. In fact, many people think of touching, hugging, and cuddling as sexual, so not having intercourse doesn't mean they stop being sexual. However, just as couples may experience a decline or a gap in relations, they may experience a decline in touching, hugging, and cuddling.

Brett: There were a lot of things I needed, but I didn't get from her. And there was a lot of, just even the hugging, the holding, even some talking about it. And it wasn't her job to fix me. There wasn't anybody that was capable of doing that.

Joan: I think there would've been times even when he wanted to hug me or he wanted to give me support, and I just didn't want it. I just felt like I wanted to deal with my grief myself.

Brett: That was so uncharacteristic, that you weren't there.

Brett and Joan eventually returned to being fully in contact, and that was the experience of most other couples who talked with me about a gap or decline in touching, hugging, and cuddling.

New Emotions

For couples who continue to have marital relations after a child dies, and for those who return after a gap, the experience is often different in important ways from what it was before the child died. What is most commonly reported is that relations are emotionally charged and immensely meaningful in new ways. For many bereaved parents, sex becomes, at least when first resumed, a powerful, life-affirming experience, a symbol of healing and being back together as a couple.

For many bereaved parents, the act has new meanings that bring up powerful new emotions. The emotions may be felt or expressed in different ways, but it is common for tears to be part of it all.

Joy: I can't even remember the first time that we made love after the accident, but I remember always just really crying after it, just sobbing, and just bringing so many emotions to the surface, and I used to think, "Aw, he's going to quit making love to me 'cause all I do is sob afterwards."

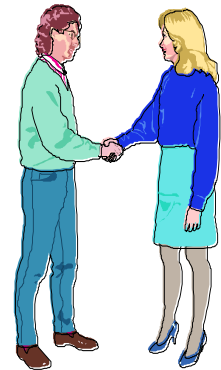
Jane: One thing I've noticed, any time we were intimate, almost always, even though I wasn't sobbing or anything like this, just the emotion. Almost every time one or the other of us would say, and it just really didn't exactly relate, and yet we just really missed him. You just were emotional, and that was the biggest emotion in our lives. We just missed him and so frequently I would get tears in my eyes, or my husband would, and we would just say to each other, "I sure still miss him."

Patience

For bereaved parents, it may be helpful to know that our research indicates that a break or decline in a couple's sexual relationship or in touching, hugging, and cuddling is not so much a difficulty as one of the things that often happens when a child dies. It's not a sign of anything disastrous in the couple's relationship or a warning about future difficulties. As with other aspects of the grief process, declines or gaps in physical contact call for patience and understanding. In the long run, many couples move on to profound depths of intimacy and develop greater mutual understanding, empathy, and communication through the process of grieving and loving together.

Paul Rosenblatt is the Morse Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. His research interests have long focused the impact of grief on the family. His grandson, Eli (Eliahu) Rosenblatt, died at age two in 1990. Paul is the founder of the Grief and Families Focus Group of the National Council on Family Relations and the author of five books and dozens of scholarly articles on grief. His book *Help Your Marriage Survive the Death of a Child* (Temple University Press, 2000) is available through Amazon.com and other booksellers.

Some quotations in this article are from Parent Grief: Narratives of Loss and Relationship, ©2000 by Paul C. Rosenblatt, and from the article, "Grief and the Sexual Relationship of Couples Who Have Experienced a Child's Death," by Annalies Hagemester and Paul C. Rosenblatt, published in Death Studies, © 1997, reprinted by permission of Taylor & Francis, Inc. Other quotes in this article are from Help Your Marriage Survive the Death of a Child, ©2000, by Paul C. Rosenblatt, reprinted by permission of Temple University Press.





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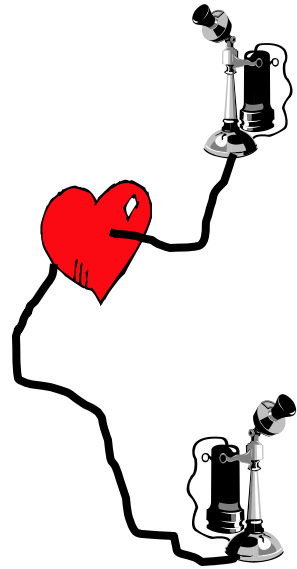


Phone Friends

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)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.



- 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 Powerspower7881@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

A FATHER'S DREAM

Kevin was the "All-American" kid. He loved sports, was an above average student, had every girl in school trying to get a date with him, and was involved in any and every activity. He was destined to go to college and become the best in any field he chose. Kevin was a special kid for the special things he said and did.

I remember when he was four. We took a ride one early spring day into the Texas hill country.

. As we crested a hill, we saw a field of bluebonnets that seemed to stretch forever. We stopped for a closer look. I'll never forget the sight of him running waist deep through those lovely flowers:

"Hey Dad!" he yelled. "You ever seen anything so beautiful?" I sure had. It was that little boy sitting in the middle of all those flowers.

His first day of school it was all I could do to keep from laughing out loud. He stood by the door, his hair still wet and combed back, wearing the new shoes he picked out himself, and clean from head to toe. I never thought I'd see that day. He looked at me with the biggest smile and told me he was ready for his first day at school. The closer we got to the door of the school, the more I could see his little bottom lip trembling with fear. After a few minutes with me standing in the doorway, he soon realized that everything would be all right. That night, he couldn't wait to tell me about his new friends and what wonderful things they had done that day. He enjoyed every day of school after that.

What I remember most is the day he learned to ride his bicycle. I spent what seemed to be months holding the bike while he pedaled. I never thought he would get the hang of it. Then one day, just after I had finished mowing the lawn, he asked me to come out in front of the house. He had something to show me. I covered my eyes at his request until he told me to look. There he was— riding his bike without any help. Although I saw him on the bike, the only thing I noticed was the expression on his face. There was a smile from ear to ear. This was his first great accomplishment by himself. How proud I was of him that day.

Who am I kidding? Kevin wasn't even with us long enough to say his first words. He didn't even get to draw his first breath.



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These are only the dreams I had for him. Dreams that I hoped we could have shared together. Dreams that only a father could have for his son. Dreams that will never happen.

He was taken from us before we could even tell him how much we loved him. We waited so long and it happened so fast. No reason. Only pain and sorrow. Maybe someday I'll understand. But for now, I can only think about the wonderful things we could have done and dreamed about.

David Evans
TCF, Palestine, TX

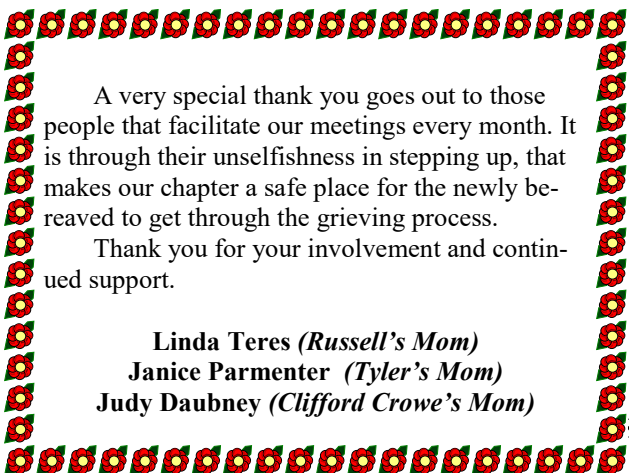
THERE'S A HOLE IN ME

There's a hole in me. You see, a part of me is missing. I keep looking for my son, and all I find are bits and pieces of him - something he wrote, a picture he took, a book he read, a tape he made, something he drew, but there is an emptiness in me that these bits and pieces cannot fill, that nothing will ever fill. I wander around, and sometimes without realizing I am doing it, I shake my head in disbelief, thinking it can't be true. But I know it is. My son is gone and he is not coming back. I will have to go to him and someday I will.

There's a hole in me and it hurts terribly, much worse than I ever imagined anything could hurt. I am angry, not at God or at my son for leaving me as some have suggested. I am not angry at anyone or anything in particular. I am just angry. I want to scream and strike out at something. Sometimes I feel as if I am going to explode and I expect to see pieces of me flying in all directions.

I want to fill this hole in me so that everything that is left within me will not spill out. I want someone else who loved him to hug me when I cry and tell me it will be all right, even though I think it will never be.

Johnie Maxwell
TCF, Lake Jackson, TX



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 be-
-veared to get through the grieving process.

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)
Janice Parmenter (Tyler's Mom)
Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)

A FATHER RETURNS TO WORK

After Kathy died, I, of course, went back to work. Some of my co-workers made the stop at my desk to express their sympathy. I know I turned them off, as my pain and my denial were so great. I could not talk about what had happened and how I felt. I thanked them. Although nobody ever talked to me about it, that was okay as my pain was such, I thought, I could not bear to talk. I threw myself into my work and on occasion was confused because I could not make the kind of decisions I had been making for years. I never made the connection that this inability to concentrate was part of my grief and was normal.

Lunch was the worst time. My habit was to eat with my associates, but often in the middle of the meal I would just have to get up and walk away. Although nobody ever said anything to me about this odd behavior, I do thank them at least for their tolerance. Slowly I readjusted (I thought) and in time (a long time) I was able to perform well again.

But I never really grieved until I found THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS and it was here that people helped me to talk. It was almost twelve years before I found TCF as there was no such organization in 1967. My friends, let TCF help you...don't wait twelve years to talk!

Bill Errnatinger
TCF, Baltimore, MD

Cemetery Moms

Jessica's Mom found another elephant to perch on Jess' headstone. She sits on the next grave marker with her arms wrapped around her knees, rocking and telling the latest about the court case that plays out her agony in the local newspaper. It was one year ago that her daughter innocently hung out with her long-time friends, boys who stole a gun they didn't think was loaded. Dads, siblings, grandparents and friends come too, but today, only Cemetery Moms are here.

Music comes from Keith's section of Clinton Grove Cemetery, where Civil War soldiers rest with the county seat's first settlers, and now our children. Keith's mother brings a tape player to comfort her while she plants and prunes and fusses over every leaf and petal. The music he wrote and performed couldn't drown out the teasing, bullying and pressure of high school and, she tells us, he ended his life.

Not far, a different Jessica's mother plants purple-blue flowers to match her daughter's purple headstone-imported from Europe - favorite color of the girl who was expected to survive heart surgery.

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Fold & Tape

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

Fold & Tape



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

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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

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 8)

She is the one who discovered her son in the garage. So we tend John's place, planting and watering around the statue representing John's pug dog.

My own little Steven lies in this section among the other young ones. He lost the battle with lifelong medical problems. I've come to change the poem in the outdoor frame next to Steven's blue headstone - blue for little boys and angels. Jessica's mom listens to how Steven "told" me to buy that little Raspberry Punch rosebush for the gravesite. (He "blew raspberries" when he was contented, which I believe he is now.)

We guess at who left some token of love for Jess. There are no car pools or school activities or passing off outgrown clothes to occupy our time and our talk. Not even the latest surgery or teenage crisis. In winter, I come Fridays, and eat my lunch in my car parked alongside our kids' section. Jessica's mom says not to worry if I don't get here every day this summer to water the impatiens; she comes every day with her sprinkling can. We are the Cemetery Moms.

**Linda May
TCF, Troy, MI**

REFLECTING BACK

by Jack Munday

A meeting of The Compassionate Friends of Delaware County recently provoked a question about how we feel working in the group. After eighteen years, I find that most of the time during the meetings I see myself as serving others, not really dealing explicitly with my bereavement. I feel good about what we're doing for others. I don't see my pain in the work we're doing as often as I see the pain of others, and I do or say what I can, knowing that there are no words that heal.

Probably a good number of the people at any one meeting are there to get help, but there are also those who stay to help others because, for one reason, they are giving back what they have gotten from others who helped them. So many people say that TCF saved their life, or their marriage or sanity.

Helping others is a good memorial to our child or sibling, since we can talk about her or him in a safe environment where others actually encourage us to tell stories about our child. If we want to keep the memories fresh, enjoy them again and again, we have that opportunity at TCF meetings to tell a silly story about our loved one, and everyone will laugh, not criticize us, saying we should be "over" that sort of remembering. We'll never be over our loss.

Another reason some of the long term bereaved help out at the meetings is that they see their work as a direct memorial to their child. Not all of us can make a huge difference in the world as a memorial to our child or sibling, like John Walsh of *America's Most Wanted* does. But all of us can do something that affirms the life of our loved one, saying to the world that "I do this because my sister, my brother, my child would be pleased to know that I still care. I am often reminded of something Fran said: If I can't have Marlys back, I want to be healed. Marlys would want me to be healed."

TCF is unique. Grief is never something that one recovers from. It is possible to be healed, to do something for others, and it's nice to have a place to share



Rosie began to tell me all about her daughter. She poured out her heart to me. She promised me that things would get better with time and assured me that nothing could ever replace the child I had lost. Rosie told me to believe in God and myself and that everything would be okay. Rosie then told me something awful, I was the first person she had ever spoken to about her daughter's death. All of her pictures and personal belongings were removed from the home. Not another word was ever mentioned about Rosie's daughter. the memories. Rosie had managed to find a few of her daughter's items and had kept them hidden for years. Rosie asked if I wanted to see them. As I watched her carefully unwrap the crochet needles and gloves that belonged to her daughter. I could see how much she loved and missed her. I am sure not a day went by in those past 40 years when Rosie did not think of her child. My heart ached so much for Rosie and her daughter. Rosie told me it was very hard for her to forgive her family for the way they acted after her daughter died. She explained that they probably thought it would just be best for everyone if they would forget the child who died. If only they knew how Rosie really felt and how much she needed always to remember her little girl.

The week ended too soon. It was very difficult to say good-bye to my new friend. I thanked Rosie for all that she had done for me and she thanked me for listening and letting her share.

There are many things that we can learn from this story. I know of one for sure, why we are here and why we are The Compassionate Friends.

**Louise Marie Gaskin
TCF, Amherst, NY**



The Compassionate Friends
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Address Correction Requested

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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



TO OUR OLD MEMBERS

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