



# 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 2010



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Vol. 15 Issue 5

### 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: **Sept. 21st Oct. 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:

**Sept. 28th Oct. 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.

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. ©2010

### 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
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### Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo	508/473-7913
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### Webmaster

*Al Kennedy	508/533/9299
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### Librarian

Ed Motuzas	508/473/4239
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### Newsletter

Ed Motuzas	508/473-4239
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### Senior Advisors

*Rick & Peg Dugan	508/877-1363
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### Steering Committee \*

Judy Daubney	508/529-6942
Janice Parmenter	508/528-5715
Linda Teres	508/620-0613
Carmela Bergman	508/359-8902
Mitchell Greenblatt	508/881-2111
Judith Cherrington	508/473-4087

The chapter address is:

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

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

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

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

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

## TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

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

### Love Gifts

Marcie Greene in loving memory of her children  
*Roy I. Randall III* and *Lisa E. Randall*.

Marilyn J. Rossetti in loving memory of her daughter  
*Christina M. Rossetti*.

Mr. George J. Capadais in loving memory of his son  
*Richard G. Capadais* on his anniversary June 15th.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Therrien in loving memory of their sweet daughter *Dana Nicole Therrien*.

Mrs. Muriel C. McCloy in loving memory of her son  
*Joseph A. McCloy*.

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

Mr. Robert Hudson in loving memory of his sister  
*Rita Hudson-Carney* on her anniversary August 5th.

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Parmenter in loving memory of their son  
*Tyler Parmenter* on his birthday September 4th. We love and miss you, Mom & Dad.

Mr. & Mrs. William Bardol in loving memory of their son  
*William H. Bardol Jr.* on his anniversary August 5th.

**Thank you, for  
all you do.**



Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure  
you are.

Let me learn from you, love you, savor you,  
bless you before you depart.

Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare  
and perfect tomorrow. Let me hold you while I  
may, for it will not always be so.

One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or  
bury my face in the pillow, or stretch myself taut,  
or raise my hands to the sky, and want more than  
all the world for your return. ~

*by Mary Jean Irion*





# 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 September and October. 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*

### *September*

CINDY CABRAL-BEATSON  
JASON R. BOGHOSIAN  
KERRY LEIGH SILVESTRO  
KATHY A. BURNS  
DONNA M. McHUGH  
WILLIAM BENJAMIN HUMPHREY  
GREG BRUNO

### *October*

BRUCE F. BENNETT  
GIANNA ROSE THERESE RABINOWITZ  
DEBORAH NICHOLS-WEAVER  
LAURA SWYMER-CLANCY  
BRYAN PLUNKETT  
MARC R. PEARLMAN  
CLIFFORD CROWE

## *Birthdays*

### *September*

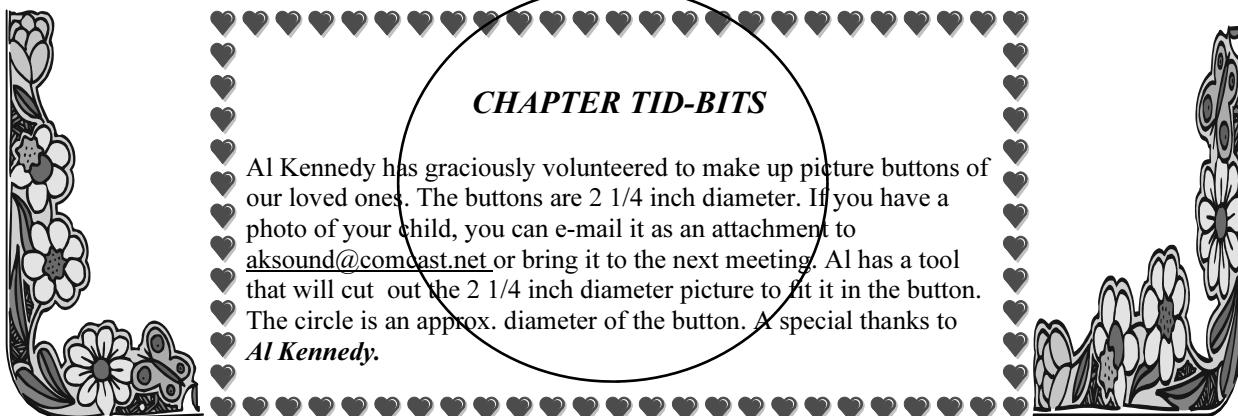
TYLER PARMENTER  
SCOTT M. BULOCK  
WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE  
RUSSELL J. TERES  
KERRY LEIGH SILVESTRO  
BRIAN D. CONNORS  
KRIS DANIEL GENTILOTTI  
MATTHEW PISAPIA

### *October*

KATHY A. BURNS  
DAVID C. LACY  
STEPHANIE LAUREN COLLETT  
COREY S. VAUTIER  
DENNIS M. HENNIGAN  
DONNA M. McHUGH  
JOSHUA WILLIAMS  
NATHANIEL WOODRUFF  
CAREN L. FIRTH  
CHRISTINA M. ROSSETTI  
ROBERT F. DUMONT JR.  
SUSAN ROSE THOMSON

## **CHAPTER TID-BITS**

Al Kennedy has graciously volunteered to make up picture buttons of our loved ones. The buttons are 2 1/4 inch diameter. If you have a photo of your child, you can e-mail it as an attachment to [aksound@comcast.net](mailto:aksound@comcast.net) or bring it to the next meeting. Al has a tool that will cut out the 2 1/4 inch diameter picture to fit it in the button. The circle is an approx. diameter of the button. A special thanks to *Al Kennedy*.





# **THE SIBLING CORNER**

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



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

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

## **TEARING DOWN WALLS**

I attended my first Compassionate Friends conference in Philadelphia during the summer of 1997. The fifth anniversary of my twin brother Alan's death had just passed a few weeks earlier. Until that year I worked nights and was unable to attend TCF meetings. Philadelphia was the place Alan called home after college. He lived only a few blocks from our grandmother who had passed away three years after him.

I remember walking around in a town where I had once felt so much happiness only to realize that the people who made it enjoyable were gone and that left me feeling even sadder. I was very anxious as I pulled into the hotel parking lot. I had heard that people had found past conferences most helpful, but what if I didn't?

I think one of the highlights of the conference was the AIDS workshop. I was really looking forward to meeting people who had been through what I had been through. At that time I didn't personally know anyone else who had lost someone to AIDS. The workshop presenters had found out at the same time that their son was gay and that he had AIDS. They were fortunate to have a year to spend with him and take care of him. The workshop started with an "ice breaker", an activity where we were given a list. It was the job of the participants to find out from each other who had done similar things or had similar traits. The point of the activity was to show how easily people could be segregated.

Although the workshop wasn't as well attended as most, I found it to be most helpful. It helped to hear what had helped others and what they had gone through. I had people to call upon if I ever wanted to talk. Upon leaving the workshop I got very nervous. The leaders of my chapter were sitting in the back.

I asked how long have you been sitting here, they replied, not very long. At the time I didn't realize they didn't know what workshop they had walked into. I said, "I have something to tell you. At our chapter meeting when it is my turn in the big circle I say that I had lost my twin brother Alan on June 25, 1992. He died of cancer, but he didn't, he died of AIDS." I thought they would be angry and tell me not to come back. They said what difference does it make how someone dies. They couldn't understand why I would be afraid to say that Alan died of AIDS.

The following year I took the same workshop, in Nashville; there were only three in attendance. The presenter knew of someone at the conference who lost a child to AIDS but was saying the cause of death was cancer. After Alan's death both my parents told me they would tell people that he died of cancer. I understood why they were doing this as I had told childhood friends, a month before he died, that Alan had cancer. I was afraid of losing life long friends. Alan never told those friends and relatives of his sexuality and I didn't feel that I could tell them about that as well as the AIDS.

Alan and I, as Alan said, shared a "womb with a view" until we were born in 1961. While walking home from a movie he came out to me, he told me he was gay. He was very surprised and relieved that I wasn't going to disown him.

Three years after his death I made a panel, in Alan's memory, for the AIDS quilt. This was one of the first things I did to commemorate his life. I was asked to write a letter to accompany the panel, telling how he would like to be remembered. One of the things I wrote was "The making of a quilt for my brother will come as a surprise for many people when they find out about it:



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The friends from Philadelphia who were surprised that AIDS wasn't mentioned in his obituary, and the relatives and family friends who never knew of his lifestyle, because Alan had chosen not to say anything. We never talked about why, but I think that was what he had wanted."

*Daniel Yoffee*

## ***Reopening of School and No Child!***

Summer ends, and across our nation, from the middle of August to the week after Labor Day, schools open for another year. For those parents surviving a child of school age, be that from nursery school to college or university, this can be as trying a time as the holidays.

School buses travel again the busy highways of our cities and the quiet lanes of our countryside. Anxious parents stand with children about to make the first ride to school. Gaggles of youngsters play at countless stops across our land. America's most precious and costly activity is renewed. The children are off to school.

I remember well the silences of the September mornings of those first years. The bus no longer stopped at our home. It simply drove casually by, the people within never realizing it once carried the focus of my love, the repository of my dreams. The drone of its wheels marked anew the mind-numbing dullness of my fragmented senses as it moved its way down the tree lined lane once alive with my son's comings and goings.

It was always possible to avoid "back to school" sales. Seeing young people and their weary parents gather school supplies and clothing was just too much in those earliest years. Somehow, the perfect notebook, the brilliant sweater, the odd-shaped erasers were simply unendurable. The stream of vehicles heading for Cape Cod for that final Labor Day weekend, the last family outing to end the summer, was another scene to avoid. It was a ritual from which we seemed excluded. Could we still be a family without him?

Those years are gone now. Having returned to education, I now have "back to school" buying to do myself. I see the buses arrive to unload their treasured passengers, no longer feeling the emptiness of a bus that drives on, barren of hopes and dreams. But I do and will forever remember the pain of those unhappy years and sometimes I reflect on the many parents who now feel as I did.

If you are such a parent, if you mourn a child who leaves a school desk somewhere unfilled, I promise that you are not alone in that pain. But even though you are not alone, you know that you are forever marked, that the death of your child or children has altered you in some basic manner.

Perhaps time and much grief work remain before your spirit can yield up the agony and permit a new self to emerge. That time and work was necessary for me, as it actually is for all of us. For me, grief resolution finally recalled me to my original work. I teach. I no longer administer or direct. The need for that fled before bereavement's assault.

I teach math, science, and social studies to sixth grade children, ages 11 to 12 over the course of a year. In wondrous ways they have restored love to my living. There is nothing of an intellectual character with enough value to equal that, so I have given them the love and caring that was mine, evoked by and for Olin. Thus do Olin's gifts live on, called forth and given new life through the innocent and selfless love of schoolchildren.

All who walk this road realize this is not substitution. Such is not possible. But it does reflect qualities of successful reinvestment, something each of us sorely needs. Today as schools prepare for another year, I look forward to a new group of children. But cautions arise within as well, the legacy of that time over 12 years ago, when the world came to a sudden halt, when the laughter of lifetimes ceased, when dreams evaporated with a morning mist.

For those of us who dare live and love again, for those fortunate enough to have found a reinvestment encouraging the same, there is always risk. After all, tragedy can strike again. Our present or past pain grants no immunity. Students, the children within the school, invited me, albeit unknowingly, to take that risk again, although certainly not at the rich and deep level of father and son. Nevertheless, it feels right, and though I will never again know the depth of love which belonged to Olin and me, I welcome the chance to live once more on its margins.

So schools, which were once just another manifestation of hurt, have helped me to restore purpose and balance to daily living. There is surely such a reinvestment awaiting all of us, but we must seek the circumstances and create the opportunities for it to occur. I pray that all of us who have not yet had such good fortune may soon do so. All of our children would want this for us as well. With that thought in mind, it is indeed worth striving for that dimension in life once more.

*Don Hackett  
TCF, Kingston, MA*





# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## FALL

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south “talking” with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so “down” and preoccupied with our child’s death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us. Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

**Peggy Hartzell  
TCF, Ambler, PA**



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)**



## When a Couple is Hit with the “Worst Loss”

*Editor's Note: The following story was written by Scott Shibuya Brown, L.A. Times staff writer and appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Sunday, July 2, 1995.*

Three years ago, death of the most wrongful sort claimed two victims in Joe and Donna's household (they asked that their real names not be used). The first victim was the couple's 18-month-old daughter, Melanie, who died from a malignant brain tumor. The second was more unexpected: Joe and Donna's once strong, six-year marriage, which crumbled in the aftermath of their child's passing.

“Both of them were lost in fear and grief,” says a psychologist who counseled Donna. “They were unable to sustain each other.”

Of all the tribulations that test the bonds of marriage, none is as overwhelming as the death of a child. Although there are no studies to correlate deaths with divorces, psychologists and other therapists say they are accustomed to seeing the events in tandem. A child's death, they say, invariably triggers a pathology in the surviving family, with many previously healthy unions succumbing under the weight of the tragedy.

“There is a significant rise in divorces in families whose children have died,” says Arthur Kovacs, a Santa Monica psychologist who treats patients suffering from grief. The husband and wife “cry out for comfort, and no one has any to give.”

Says one San Diego mother whose adolescent son died five years ago, “When you lose a child, your losses are just beginning.”

Nationally, about 65,000 children die every year, and there are several well-known groups, such as Parents of Murdered Children and The Compassionate Friends, that provide support and information for bereaved parents. The day of the Oklahoma bombing, members of local and regional chapters of Compassionate Friends arrived at the site to aid parents of the children lost in the building.

Ultimately, however, the burden of grief, blame and anger are borne by the mother and father, collectively as parents, but also as individuals. And that, therapists say, is where the secondary trauma begins. For no matter how strong the marriage might have been, the passage through the pain of losing a child is always a journey taken alone. “Grief for a child doesn't conform to the other normal expectations of other griefs,” says Barbara Rosof, a San Diego psychotherapist and author of ‘The Worst Loss: How Families Heal From the Death of a Child’ (Henry Holt & Co., 1994). “Even though a couple is married, there's a feeling that they are going through it alone. Each partner is wrapped up in their own grief.”



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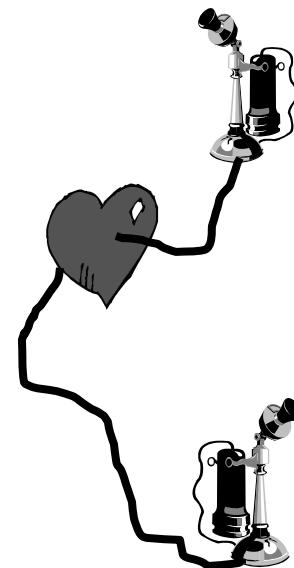


### Phone Friends

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)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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The time after a child's death means a lengthy spell of acute agony, Rosof says, a period of up to a year and a half, when "you walk around like you've been hit over the head with a baseball bat."

Paradoxically, it is also a time often marked by intense isolation from one's spouse, despite the other partner being the only person sharing the experience and sharing a commensurate amount of pain. Such isolation bodes badly for any marriage, Rosof says, but is especially destructive during a time when spouses need to communicate with each other more than ever.

"Instead of being able to help and support your partner, you feel so empty and numb and devastated, you don't have much to give," Rosof says. "People are so overwhelmed that they are not reflecting on the state of the marriage for a long time. The notion that tragedy brings people closer together is a lovely, wishful fantasy."

Many factors can influence a marriage struggling in the aftermath of a child's death. Sometimes the child may have been the only element holding a shaky marriage together. In instances where one parent was responsible for the child at the time of the death, the chances of the marriage's enduring worsen as blame is added to the guilt. "Those are almost intolerable circumstances for a marriage," Kovacs says.

Another factor that may affect the surviving parents is the nature of the child's death. Jeanne Murrone, a Charlotte, N.C. clinical psychologist, who works with grief related issues, says in situations in which children have died after a lengthy illness, parents have to have time to adjust to the impending loss. When the child's suffering has been especially great, death may also bring about a sense of relief.

But sudden deaths from accidents or tragedies like the Oklahoma City bombing, she says, are likely to be harder on parents who, in addition to being wholly unprepared for the child's death, suffer from the trauma of the event and from guilt for having placed the child in that situation.

"Can you imagine the guilt of the parents who put their children in that day care center?" Kovacs asks. "They will replay endlessly what they would have done differently."

One dissenting voice on the nature of grief, is Andrea Gambill, editor-in-chief of Bereavement magazine, a publication she calls "a support group in print." Gambill, who lost her 17-year-old daughter, almost 20 years ago, says the notion that divorce follows death is "absolutely not true" and that in most cases losing a child "will strengthen a marriage...in the long run."

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"This is all based on the assumption that a child's death is a terrible stress on a marriage and therefore it will end up in divorce court," says Gambill, who says the presumption that a child's death will trigger divorce is based only on anecdotal experience and not clinical data.

"The investment that each parent had in the child gives them a link they don't want to end," she says. Similarly, in cases where one parent may have been in charge of the child at the time of death, Gambill's experience through the magazine has been that there "is not a lot of blaming."

"If the blame exists, it is short-lived," she says. "When two people love each other, they are very willing to understand how it could have been them in charge."

Such understanding, however, is not likely to be forthcoming immediately after a child's death. Therapists recommend that following a loss, grieving parents should look outside their marriage to friends, religion, and family for support and respect the manner in which the other spouse grieves.

In many cases, one or both parents may find it difficult to discuss the child's death until months or years after the fact. One northern California woman, whose toddler drowned in a bathtub and who was divorced shortly afterward, says she and her husband could never bring themselves to really talk about their son's death. Decades later, both having remarried, they met each other in public and both broke down crying and were for the first time able to communicate their shared pain and loss.



Psychologists say, too, that while most parents learn how to cope with their loss, they rarely are ever able to forget it. Recently, Kovacs began counseling an 82-year-old woman who more than 50 years ago lost her 8-year-old son to leukemia. Although she separated from her husband, they later reconciled. The woman produced a faded photograph of her son, one she always carried in her wallet. "She wept as bitterly as if it had been yesterday," Kovacs says.

"A death of a child goes on for the rest of your life," Rosof says. "To the parents of a dead child, he grows up in their minds every day, like 'today he would be starting the first grade,' or 'today, he'd be getting his driver's license. Twenty years after, parents will say, 'I think about him every day.'"

### GRIEVING IS A LONELY JOB

I don't care what anybody says, grieving is a very lonely job. Friends and family try to help in their own way, but, sometimes it's almost too much effort to try to explain how you feel inside.

In fact, I'm not so sure that there are words to describe the feeling. It isn't "physical pain," and I don't know if "emotional pain" is any more descriptive. It's just a feeling that's always there. The sadness, the loneliness, the helplessness. On the outside, of course, no one would know. From the beginning people would always tell me how great I looked or how well I was doing. What did they expect? Sometimes I'm tempted to ask, "Well, how do you expect me to look?" But I don't. They mean well. They just don't know what else to say.

Oh, it's true, the last 15 months since my 17 year old son, Shane was killed in a motorcycle accident with his friend, I've come a long way. Life is good, and I have much to look forward to each day. A challenging job, terrific friends, a great family including Shane's 14 year old brother, Zachary. But there are days when it's just not enough.

It's interesting how your entire perspective about life changes when you're forced to endure a personal tragedy. I call it my "Big Deal Scale". Losing Shane was the "biggest deal" I've ever experienced. It gives me a tool in which to measure the trivial ups and downs of life. We all have the strength to endure a tremendous amount of pain. We just have to get it in perspective.

It doesn't come easy. I consciously work at it every day. I wonder if it will ever go away. Sometimes I hope it doesn't. I guess it's my way of remembering... holding on.

My biggest source of strength comes from Zachary, though. My heart aches for him; knowing how close he was to Shane. The first few days after the accident, he said, "Shane was my idol. He always helped me and taught me things." It's hard for me to imagine what it must be like for him. Still sleeping in the same room that they shared for 13 years. Although, now he sleeps in Shane's bed, and does his homework at Shane's desk. He says he likes it like that. I guess it's just his way of remembering. Of holding on.

Months ago when Zachary asked when the "hurt" would stop, I didn't have an instant answer. Grieving is a lonely job. To be done in individual time frames. But what I did tell him was, "Trust me. The pain will eventually fade but, the memories will last a lifetime." And just the other day he said to me, "You're right, Mom, The hurt is much better." I can see it in his face, in his eyes. He has matured so much this last year. It seems like he was a baby when all this happened. Now, I can see so much of Shane in him. And, I know that if he can do this "job", he can handle anything. And so can I.

*Susan Hedlund  
TCF, Portland, OR*



# 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.

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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.

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# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



## AUTUMN FEELINGS

During the next couple of months, we will see many changes taking place in the world around us. The amount of daylight is decreasing; nights are becoming chilly: we'll often need sweaters or jackets as we venture forth each day. However, the most dramatic change we notice here in New England during September and October is that of the trees trading their green summer outfits for the brilliant reds, oranges and golds of autumn.

Many of us who are bereaved parents find ourselves feeling tense and depressed when the earth awakens in the spring; we may also experience these feelings when the dramatic changes of autumn occur.

A wise lady once said to me, "Our bodies respond to the changing seasons." She was right. They do! And they respond by FEELING. It seems to me that all of the grief feelings that I have, emptiness, sadness, anger, loneliness, guilt and depression, are all intensified as the world of nature around me changes.

Sometimes, however, we can draw strength from situations that seem, on the surface, to be negative. A few weeks after Linda's death, I heard from two friends within a few days of each other. One said, "You know, when I am troubled, I get out and walk until I find something in nature that I've never seen before. I look at it and think about it and I am renewed." The other friend, who has some physical disabilities, wrote me a note in which she said, "Whenever I feel discouraged I find something in nature to study, and I am renewed."

I think hearing from these two friends within just a few days of each other had to be more than just a coincidence. I feel that there was an important message there for me, and I've tried to act on it.

I can draw strength from an early morning walk, from frost patterns on our windows, from a raging blizzard, from birds at our feeder, from a rainbow, a ladybug or a whale, if I slow down, think about those things, observe their intricacy and beauty, and attempt to let some of their energy into myself.

We have to slow down, try to realize what is happening to us and be receptive to the energy that is in the natural world for us.

When I'm down because it's a sparkling, clear, colorful autumn day and Linda isn't here to experience it with me, I have to feel that pain, then let it go so that the natural beauty and energy around me can strengthen and renew me.

Let yourself experience autumn — the emptiness and aching that you feel. Then try to let go of those feelings, just enough to let the wonder and beauty of the season into yourself — one day at a time.

**Evelyn Billings  
TCF, Springfield, MA**

## DEAR COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

My husband and I have just experienced the first anniversary since our baby's death. We have survived through all of the firsts. We have cried and grieved. We have faced guilt and anger. We have experienced depression and frustration. The biggest and most important lesson we are still learning is acceptance and hope.

For those who have suffered a more recent loss, this may sound impossible, but we have started to live again. We even smile, laugh, and find enjoyment in our lives. In short, we are learning to cope. Do not misunderstand, we do not forget our Samantha. We relive her 29 days of life within our hearts and minds every day. But instead of memories bringing a sharp cut like a new steak knife, they now make a lesser cut like a knife dulled by use. Losing her still hurts, but not all the time and not as intensely. Special days will always be hard, and we don't expect that ever to change. But every day living is better. I guess what we want you to know is that in time it does get easier. In your own time, maybe not in a year but at your own pace, you will find your way through this land we call grief.

When I was a little girl, my mom would take my family on "adventures." Sometimes they were fascinating and wonderful, and other times they were scary and difficult. As I grew up, I learned that my mother's adventures actually meant we were lost and were finding our way home as best we could. Grief is much the same. It is a scary and difficult journey in life. We all must find our way home the best way that we can. My hope and thoughts travel with you on your adventure. And if we should meet out there, you will find a friend to help you.

**Cheryl Brown  
TCF, Miami - Whitewater, FL**



### Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter ( Dudley, Webster areas)
- Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu  
(508) 248-7144.....ampm@charter.net
- South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)  
Martha Berman  
(781) 337-8649.....mmartha1@comcast.net
- Worcester Chapter
- Chapter Leader: Linda Schafer  
(508) 393-4448...capecodlinda23@verizon.net
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)  
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole  
(781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com

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### **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."*