



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 2011

© 2011 The Compassionate Friends, All rights Reserved Vol. 16 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: **September 20th October 18th**

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:

September 27th October 25th

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. ©2011

Weather Cancellation

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

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



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

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

Secretary

- * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

- * Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

- * Al Kennedy 508/533-9299

Librarian

- Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Newsletter

- Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

- * Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

- Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
- Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
- Linda Teres 508/620-0613
- 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

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

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

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

Love Gifts

- Mr. & Mrs. Richard Parmenter in loving memory of their son **Tyler Parmenter** on his birthday September 4th.
- Ms. Betty Myers in loving memory of her son **William Bruce-Tagoe** on his anniversary July 6th and his birthday September 10th.
- Mr. & Mrs. Rudolph Grenache in loving memory of their son **Robert J. Grenache**.
- Mrs. Dorothy A. Pisapia in loving memory of her son **Matthew Pisapia** on his birthday September 30th.
- Mr. & Mrs. Henry Slopek in loving memory of their daughter **Laurie Ann Slopek**.
- Mr. Robert Hudson in loving memory of his sister **Rita Hudson-Carney** on her anniversary August 5th.
- Mr. & Mrs. William Bardol Sr. in loving memory of their son **William H. Bardol Jr.** on his anniversary August 5th.

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: 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



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
- CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK
- JASON R. BOGHOSIAN
- KERRY LEIGH SILVESTRO
- KATHY A. BURNS
- DONNA M. McHUGH
- JUNEAU ROHAN GUADALUPE
- DAVID A. JONES
- GREG BRUNO

October

- BRUCE F. BENNETT
- ANDREW McCUSKER
- DEBORAH NICHOLS-WEAVER
- LAURA SWYMER-CLANCY
- BRYAN PLUNKETT
- MARC R. PEARLMAN
- CLIFFORD CROWE

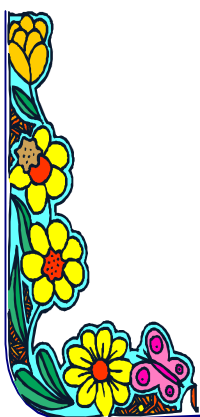
Birthdays

September

- TYLER PARMENTER
- JON A. ALBA
- WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
- RUSSELL J. TERES
- KERRY LEIGH SILVESTRO
- JUNEAU ROHAN GUADALUPE
- EMMA FRANCES DALTON
- DWAYNE V. BILLINGSLEY
- ANTHONY (TONY) COLUCCI
- BRIAN D. CONNORS
- KRIS DANIEL GENTILOTTI
- MATTHEW PISAPIA

October

- MICHAEL W. ALBA
- KATHY A. BURNS
- DAVID C. LACY
- COREY S. VAUTIER
- DENNIS M. HENNIGAN
- ALICIA M. WARD
- DONNA M. McHUGH
- CAREN L. FIRTH
- CHRISTINA M. ROSSETTI
- ROBERT F. DUMONT JR.



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 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 COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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.

The Back to School Pressure Cooker

Labor Day can put siblings into their own back to school pressure cooker. Whether this is the first year, or later, our kids may be dealing with questions and comments from peers, teachers, and/or counselors about their brother or sister. Or perhaps no one is talking, because no one knows what to say. Feelings of loneliness, being different, being left out, can surface, and sibling rivalry? Remember if you will how intense it could get between all your children. What kind of competition existed between them during the school year, or what comparisons were made: athletics, grades, friendships, extra activities? That kind of emotion is often forgotten when a child dies. But as your children go back to the classroom, to the athletic field, they may see those reminders each day. When they bring home these feelings, positive and negative, they need a place to express them without being judged, or compared to their sibling. We want to remember good. But we have to remember that no child was always good! To forget that is to make a martyr of our dead child - possibly at the expense of our living children. Our surviving children need special support at this time of year, too.

They need to be reassured that they are still lovable that they can be forgiven for any anger or resentment they may feel toward their brother or sister... that perfection is not a requirement for loving. They need to be reassured that they are separate, unique individuals, not imperfect replacements for the child who died. They need a safe place to talk, to let out their own concerns and anxieties and fears. They too are grieving and need a lot of support, especially during this back to school rush.

Cindy Cooper
TCF, St. Louis, MO 4

My Brother

When each person is born, and eventually dies
Along with that person goes millions of cries.
Family is treasured all over the earth
They all begin with the first child's birth.
The mother is filled with tears of joy
The father is proud when he sees it's a boy.
But why when that child is taken away
There's really nothing left to say.
Just tears of sorrow come pouring out
Everyone says that you shouldn't pout.
It won't bring him back, and nothing else can
When all I want to see is that handsome young man.
I'd give anything I could to see him once more
So that's why I ask, "What's this life for?"
So all the people have to learn how to cry
I learned way too early when my brother died.
Parents shouldn't bury their kid
Unfortunately, that's what his parents did.
He didn't get a chance to have kids of his own
Or tell his grandchildren all that he'd known.
I wish that I could see his smile today
But I know that his smile is miles away.
So we'll celebrate his birthday every year
Because we know that he will always be here.
I sit here and think about him every day
And wonder why he just couldn't stay.
Not a second goes by when I don't wonder why
But I guess I'll find out when I eventually die.
I'll go up to heaven to look for him
I know he'll be waiting for me with a grin.
He's probably partying with Abraham Lincoln
Just laughing and talking and smoking and drinking.

In Memory of Frankie Topham,
By his brother Joey Sannicandro,
TCF Metrowest Chapter, Holliston, MA



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



FINDING POWER IN THE FACE OF LOSS

We may feel we have no control when facing loss or death. Accidents, illnesses, and deaths can feel like random violations in our lives. But, we can have power, in painful circumstances, by choosing how we react, or how we handle the loss of people we love. How we suffer, and how much we suffer are very much in our own control. Our reactions are not a random experience. It is in finding where we can have power in these seemingly overwhelming times that we can begin to heal, grow, and move forward.

One place where we often feel powerless is over our feelings of pain and loss. Our feelings may seem intense, unbearable, and too excruciating to ever disappear. Yet, feelings by their very nature are temporary. Emotions only persist if we grasp them too tightly. We must remind ourselves to release our grip.

When we imagine that we have no choices over our emotions, we can get “stuck” in the pain of loss and suffering can become a habit. We get used to wearing mourning clothes or telling the story of our tragedy. We get used to feeling upset, discouraged, sad, or lonely. When we don’t think we have any other alternative, sorrow becomes chronic. Then we simply continue to live in misery, as if that is our only possibility.

Of course we can never skip or eliminate the pain of grief. And it is essential that we allow ourselves to mourn, which means we must admit to all the mixed emotions and intense feelings that comprise our grief. We need to express our pain and sorrow. We may even want to set aside time to allow ourselves to really express it. But that mourning is not necessarily an experience that lasts forever. We may have never considered this before, but we can make a choice about the depth of our discomfort. If we are willing to express and then say goodbye to our pain, we can choose to let it go. Freed of pain, we discover that we never stop loving people we have lost. Love lasts forever, but pain does not.

Accepting death as an inevitable outcome to every life, rather than seeing it as an incomprehensible event, a personal punishment, or a terrible deprivation, for example, can lessen the blow of losing a loved one. Accepting loss, change, illness, and accidents as parts of a full life, not just as devastating events from which we cannot recover, makes them easier to bear. Whenever we face something difficult, or feel overwhelmed or challenged, we need to look for that place where we have some power. In one moment our power may be in our ability to cry. In another it may be in our ability to laugh.

Ultimately our greatest power comes from our willingness to walk into the future and to face whatever joys and challenges lie ahead.

Judy Tatelbaum
Journeys
Hospice Foundation of America

Death of a Child

The pain I feel now I would not have felt
If you had never been
The ache in my heart is a heavy load,
Carried but never seen.

In quiet moments or busy times.
Alone, or in a crowd,
The hurt creeps in and fills my soul
Till I feel I must cry aloud.

If I could turn the time clocks back
To the day when you were born,
Still gladly I’d bear the pains again.
And, oh—how I’d treasure that morn.

For then I’d know how short the days
Of your stay with us would be.
I’d show you love in a thousand ways
And keep you ever close to me.

Yet I know you were part of His plan
You will never really be lost.
For the love you were given and
the love you gave
Far outweigh the pain you cost.

Jake Wilkie
TCF, Brisbane, Australia

MEMORIES

The certain special memories
That follow me each day,
Cast your shadow in my life
In a certain way.
Sometimes the blowing wind
Or the lyrics of a song,
Make me stop and think of you
Sometimes all day long.
Memories are good to have
To share and keep in my heart,
Just knowing that you’re still inside
Makes sure we’ll never part.

Collette Covington
TCF, Lake Charles, LA



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



I'LL HAVE THE BEEF CHOW MEIN

So much of my progress is a result of my seeking knowledge. I gathered this knowledge by asking other bereaved parents questions and by observing their actions. I did this because as the cliché goes, “knowledge is power.”

I realized very early on that no one could take this dark ride for me. Choices had to be made and, right or wrong, I had to make them.

I could have chosen to let my life end when John died. Not necessarily in the physical sense, but more so in the spiritual sense. It would have been very easy for me to bury my soul right along with Johnny. Five years earlier I stood, just as my son Blake was standing then, at a brother’s grave and I watched a parent do just that. Why on earth would I want to inflict that much pain on my surviving son?

To deny the pain that I felt would have been impossible but it would have been equally futile, dishonest, and destructive to deny the love I feel for Blake and Kelsy.

Denial is a huge waste of time and energy. I think what has helped me most has been acceptance.

I will never accept that there is a good reason for John’s death. I don’t believe in the “Grand Tapestry” theory. If you do and it works for you, then I say BRAVO for you.

I accept that he is gone. That one sounds simpler than it actually was.

I accept that my life will always be different.

I accept that tears will always be a part of my life just as laughter will also always be a part of my life.

I accept that sometimes when I hug the kids, I’m actually hugging Johnny in my heart.

I accept that it is up to me to make the most of my life.

I once wrote that it is how we let our children’s lives affect us that becomes the legacy that they leave behind. I believed it when I wrote it and I still believe it today.

All of these things that I’ve accepted and the ones I’ve not mentioned didn’t all happen at once.

Each progression in our grief work brings new acceptance with it. It doesn’t happen instantly either. The decisions are ours to make. We are on our own, but we are not alone.

Just as I found out that getting better does not mean forgetting Johnny, I discovered a group of people who have been there and understand. People that I could turn to for advice, compassion and support.

I went to TCF meetings and I shared my fears and feelings. It wasn’t easy and it hurt, but it also helped. It supplied me with information which in turn became options. No one, and I do mean no one, has the right to tell any of us how to grieve our children’s deaths.

Having said that let me say that another bereaved parent is qualified to exchange ideas with us. It is up to us to sort out what will help and what will not help us. I personally would have a real problem with taking advice from someone 4, 5, 6, 7 or more years down the road and is still standing on “square one.”

There are people who look up and are bewildered when they realize they are alone because they have alienated everyone around them. They choose to let their child’s death become their very existence. I find this terribly sad.

If you’re newly bereaved, the road ahead is nasty, but if you find a way to survive it you will emerge a stronger person.

Make choices that feel right for you.

Remember that every step won’t be forward and that every step backward isn’t always a defeat. TCF is a well of ideas and knowledge. We in TCF need to remember that we are a support group whose mission is to help people resolve their grief in a positive manner.

Don McLean wrote in the song, *Crossroads*, “There’s no need for turning back, all roads lead to where we stand and I believe we’ll walk them all no matter what we have planned.”

Search out what works for you. Call a phone friend when you need someone to talk to or just to be listened to. I wouldn’t be here today if I hadn’t done that.

It’s like a Chinese Menu where you can select an entree from column “A” and a side dish from column “B.”

Find out what your options are and make your choices.

May we all find peace and hope for tomorrow.

Tom Wyatt
TCF, St Louis, MO

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

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



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

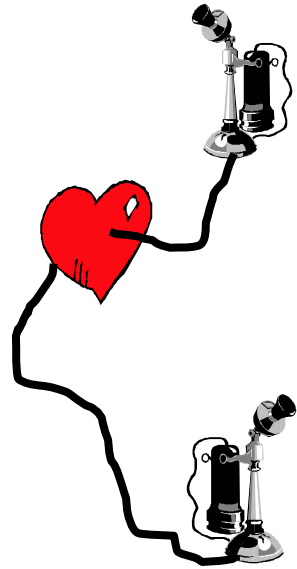


Phone Friends

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

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942.
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt,....**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Judith Cherrington,....**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer,(508)473-4087
- Gloria Rabinowitz.....**Gianna Rose Therese**, Still Born,.....(774)287-6497
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106
- Linda Schafer.....**Kimberly Ann**, age 16, Now Childless,.....(508)393-4448

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.



What did your child leave you?

I recently attended a workshop called “Living with Loss.” One exercise was to write an “ethical will” that is an accounting of the intangibles a loved one has left behind. I’d like to share what I believe my infant son left me.

- He proved to me that life truly is fragile, and I will handle it now more carefully. My children yet to come will benefit from my having had and lost Michael.
- He taught me that not all problems in life are monumental, and that I must remember to put things in perspective.
- He allowed me to reassess my spiritual beliefs. I need to do this from time to time in my life, and that is all right because there is a loving, caring God, and He is with me no matter what.
- He showed me that each individual, in some way, leaves a mark in this world, or moves someone just so, regardless of how long his life is, or how short.
- He gave me a reason and a need to help other people.
- He reminded me to show, and tell, the people I love how I feel about them as often and as openly as I can!

Linda Worth
TCF, Bremerton, WA

A note to the newly bereaved.... (and a reminder to the rest of us)

The first months and years of bereavement can be terrifying. It seems as if the pain stays at a monotonous peak; it seems as if one’s mind will be lost at any moment. And although most of us “get better” after the first terror, we usually do not realize that until we look back, years later.

When we think about it this state of affairs is almost “reasonable”. After such an overwhelmingly traumatic experience, we can fall - as it were - to the end of the world. Coming back from there is bound to be slow beyond our imagination and fraught with reversals. So far, no one has found a method to avoid this painful journey back. But perhaps it will help you to know you have already begun to travel ... You will find it is a long journey, and desperately hard - and you may almost want to stay where you are. But you will realize later that the wind of tomorrow is already stretching your sails, and life waits for you across the sea. If you only knew....

Sascha Wagner
TCF, Des Moines, IA



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



ALAN PEDERSEN'S Angels Across The USA Concert

Is coming to Holliston
Wednesday October 5, 2011 at 7:00 P.M.
at: St. Mary Church (lower church hall)
Washington St. (Rte. 16)
Holliston, MA 01746

Admission Free

The Angels Across the USA Tour is a yearlong series of concert events featuring the music and message of Alan Pedersen. The purpose of this tour is to bring community awareness and media attention to grief organizations large and small who reach out to bereaved families.

Alan's work is truly a ministry; there will not be any fees charged to the organizations that host an event this year. The tour is being sponsored by hundreds of families just like yours, who have lost a child and want to have their Angel travel across the USA.

Light refreshments, coffee and cold drinks will be available.

Please feel free to bring your child's photo to display.

For more information about this event please contact Ed or Joan Motuzas, The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest Chapter, 508-473-4239.

Visit the Angels Across The USA website:
www.angelsacrosstheusa.com

Thoughts on School

Another summer has come and gone. School has begun, a new beginning for most families, and bathing suits hang forgotten as children shop and choose new clothes and necessary school supplies for the coming year. This is great, but what if your child won't be going back to school? One mother was surprised to learn that the beginning of school would have to be anticipated along with other holidays during the first year of grieving for her child.

"It seemed like everywhere I looked," she explained, "children were dressed in new fall clothes, carrying new book bags and lunch boxes. And it hurt so badly." I suppose Cecil and I learned about holidays from the very beginning since Sherry was killed on the Fourth of July. For weeks before the Fourth, we cringe as announcers on television promote places and activities for participants to gather and celebrate the birth of our nation. Even though Cecil and I, and Sherry's sister and brothers can't "celebrate" that day, we have learned to cope with it by planning an outing away from the firecrackers, a time to celebrate Sherry's life, even though that life ended far too soon. And, dear friends, my message is that, when school begins, parents of those children who won't be back in school this year can use the same coping skills: drawing close to spouses, surviving children or understanding, 8
compassionate friends in celebration of that child's life.

We can never block out what is happening around us, nor should we try to, but we can adapt our activities to better fit our grief walk. I always say grieving parents have to find a drummer who suits their gait better than the drummer still marching in the fast lane!

***Martha Dark
TCF, Charlotte, NC***

When You Lose an Only Child

The loss of an only child is neither greater nor less than the loss of one of many children. However, the loss of an only child is experienced differently. It is different because you lose your parenthood, which is such a large part of the life of any parent.

1. With the death of an only child, you lose the one person who could use all of the love you had to give every hour of every day. One of the secrets of parenthood is that from birth, children teach us that we have a greater capacity for unselfish love than we thought possible. When your only child dies, you may feel that you are drowning in the parental love your heart continues to generate for the child you have lost.

2. With the death of an only child, you lose so much of your own future that was tied to your child's future. The first day of school, sports, learning to drive, a first crush, a first date, a first heartbreak, high school, college, career, marriage, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren. Your only child lost all of this from his or her future. And so did you.

3. With the death of an only child, you suffer many tiny losses that cause pain only another grieving parent can comprehend. You have lost the joy of checking the cereal aisle to see if Cocoa Puffs are on sale. You have lost the reason to keep up with the top ten hits on the pop music charts. You have lost the joy of caring what prize is in a box of Cracker Jack. You have lost the joy of getting up early on a Saturday morning for kids soccer, basketball, or bowling. You have lost the reason to hope for a December snow. You have lost the person who thought you made the best cocoa on a cool December evening. For me, I lost a gentle, kind, generous child who loved, watched for, and shared beautiful sunsets.

The loss of an only child is a devastating loss. Your child has lost his or her life. And you have lost an important piece of your own life, your parenthood. The Compassionate Friends chapter near you is there to help you acknowledge and grieve these losses by sharing your pain with others who have known their own pain.

***Bill Snapp
Atlanta (Tucker) TCF
in memory of son Bill Snapp***



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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

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

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

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

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

I (do___) (do not___) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

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

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

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

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

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

Fold & Tape

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

Fold & Tape



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance.

You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe . . . the coats of others' expectations taken off.

Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.

In this place all names can be spoken; In this place each one's story may be told.

We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; In this place ALL feelings, we enfold.

Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed.

Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road we see ahead.

And those we love are pleased we are together, smile down on us, and bless this day, glad for every tiny step we are taking as they send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending strength for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters, in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
Written July 30, 2004

***For those attending their first meeting of
The Compassionate Friends***

Where is My Child Now?

So many times after our son died, I found myself asking questions: Where has he gone? Is there life after death? Is there really a Heaven? Was his life with us worth anything?

I read. I talked to people. I prayed. I cried. I became depressed and yelled at God. Then I found Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book ***Children and Death***. She responded to a mother's letter and shared her wisdom and experience. She told that grieving mother (and through her, me) that out of her pain, if she chooses, comes a great amount of compassion, increased understanding and wisdom, and love for others who are in pain. It is her choice whether out of her tragedy comes a blessing or a curse, compassion or bitterness.

She concluded her letter with these words, "I want you to know that our research in death and life after death has revealed beyond a shadow of a doubt that those who make the transition are more alive, more surrounded with unconditional love and beauty than you can ever conceive.

"They're not really dead. They have just preceded us in the journey all of us are going to take. They are with their former playmates (their guardian angels).

"They are with family members who preceded them in death, and they are unable to miss you as you miss them since they are unable to feel any negative feelings. The only thing that stays with them is the knowledge of love and care that they have received and of the lessons they have learned 'in their physical life'

Believing that my son is happy and at peace, that he feels no pain, and knowing that he is aware of the love and care we gave him, has diminished the need for all of those questions and the anger. I still feel the emptiness, and I miss him. But I am consoled. I loved him. My love mattered. He is fine.

Claudia Walker
TCF, Alexandria, VA

Autumn Tears

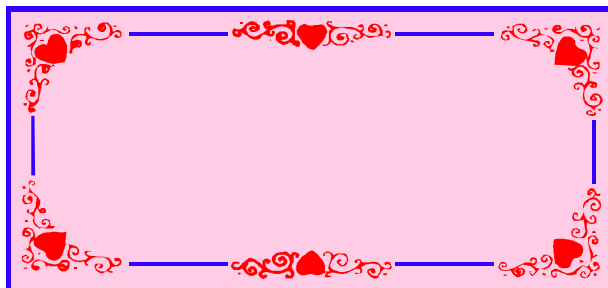
We look back on September and we realize that somehow we made it through those dreaded first days of school. Whether it was the anticipation of the actual days that were the worst, we survived. We used our faith, our support systems or just plain hard work and made it over yet another hurdle. We watched small children heading for their first day of kindergarten, listened to excited teenagers talk of high school and heard stories of children leaving home to attend post-secondary school. Somehow we rode the waves of grief and found ourselves ashore again.

As these waves subside new ones will build as we head into the holidays that speak of, and to, children. Halloween will soon approach and for some, painful memories. Thanksgiving arrives to exemplify family and togetherness and Christmas looms ahead. These special days are forever reminders of our loss, the costumes we'll never sew, the empty chair at turkey dinner, the fun and magic we'll never share with someone we love. Forever reminds that our child has died.

To survive when these events and anniversary days come around let's find time to think of the good memories we have, the announcement of our long-awaited pregnancy at Thanksgiving dinner, the look of excitement on our son's first Halloween night, the vision of our daughter helping prepare the turkey dinner. These holidays will always be reminders that our child died. Let us also make them reminders that our child lived! They left us memories more precious than any others to hold and celebrate!

Penny Young
TCF, Powell River, BC

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



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.”*