



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, 2021

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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:00 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 via. Zoom Cast:***

September 21st. & October 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 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.

September 28th. & October 26th.

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. ©2020

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.

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

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Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Mitchell Greenblatt 857/225-7135
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

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
 dennisgravelle78@gmail.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.

Mrs. Maria Peniche in loving memory of her son **Manuel (Manny) Peniche**. "Forever missed, always loved".

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Durkin in loving memory **Casey Durkin** on his anniversary August 21st.

Ms. Lynn Waugh in loving memory of her daughter **Kelsey Mulkerrins**. "Always loved and never forgotten".

Mr. & Mrs. Barry Buchinski in loving memory of their son **Adam J. Buchinski** on his birthday September 19th.. "Always loved and never forgotten".

Mr. & Mrs. Steve Prouty in loving memory of their daughter **Lillian (Lilly) M. Prouty**. "Everyday is one day closer to you" Love always & forever, Mom & Dad.

Chapter Notes.

Save this date, December 12th, 2021. We have reserved Restaurant 45 for our annual Candle Lighting Ceremony. More details will appear in the November / December Newsletter.





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. 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

CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK
MONICA MICHELLE CURRAN
DAVID HEMINGWAY
GREG BRUNO
MICHAEL VINCENT TYNAN

October

SAMANTHA
JOSHUA JAMES NOREAU
ERIN C. LAVALLA
DAVID A. SCHNEGG
CHRISTOPHER L. DAVEY
MARC R. PEARLMAN
CLIFFORD CROWE

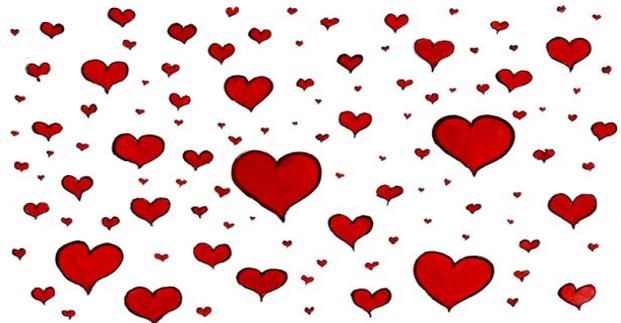
Birthdays

September

TYLER PARMENTER
CONOR A. ISETTS
SAMUEL O'DEFE OTOBO
WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
CHRISTOPHER THOMAS GRYNKEWICZ
RUSSELL J. TERES
JOSHUA JAMES NOREAU
ADAM J. BUCHINSKI
AARON STEVEN GRAY
ALFRED C. MUCCI JR

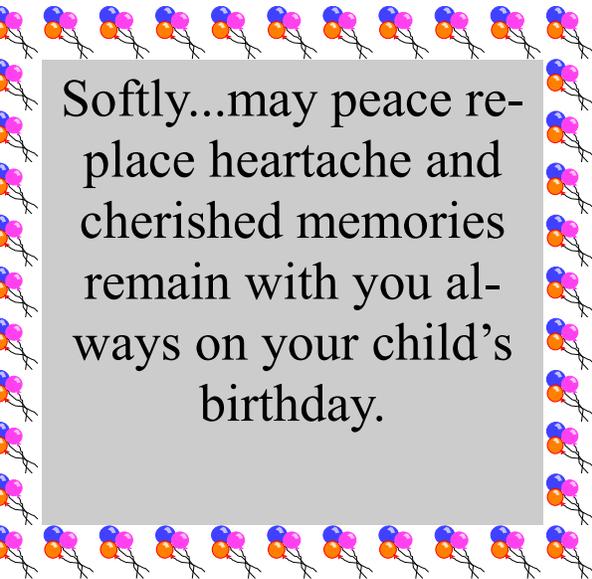
October

KYLE E. KOMARNICKI
COREY S. VAUTIER
CHARLES J. FERRERA
DENNIS M. HENNIGAN
EVAN TIMOTHY GOLDING
MICHAEL J. HAVER
COREY A. MORELLI
TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN



My apologies to Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Miller for omitting their sons name ***Ethan Wayne Miller*** in the last issue of the newsletter. Also, a correction was brought to my attention that ***Adam J. Buchinski*** donation was for his anniversary not his birthday in the May/June issue of our newsletter.

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.

COPING WITH THE GRIEF OF OLDER SIBLINGS

Everyone grieves differently. A sibling's response is determined by his or her relationship to the child who died and place in the family.

The most difficult thing for them is that the foundation of the family is shaken. Every-thing has changed over night and that leaves them feeling insecure.

The death of a sibling is a mid - life crisis for kids. Suddenly they are aware of their own mortality. That may cause them to become over - protective. They may also overreact to illnesses.

They will rarely talk about their feelings because they're afraid it will hurt their parents more. The reality here is that parents are at the bottom of the list of people they will talk to, but that doesn't mean they aren't talking to someone.

School becomes a terrible problem and grades drop because they can't function any better than we do as parents.

At some point in the grief process overachieving can also become a way of dealing with pain.

Conflicts intensify between remaining siblings.

Sometimes there is nothing you can do for your kids but allow them to hurt. At the same time, it is hard for parents to let the grief be the child's problem.

They feel they have to make up for the child who's gone.

Kids will think, "it should have been me. You wouldn't hurt quite as much if it were me."

There is likely to be some distancing for awhile. There is also a fear that if you pull away you'll never be close again, but that usually doesn't happen.

You have to develop memories of things that happened after the child died, and you have to develop new traditions, but that takes years.

The loss surfaces for young people at every milestone in their lives - significant birthdays, graduation, weddings, parenthood, etc.

The child who is suddenly the only child has envy of other kids siblings. They seem to experience more anger and pain than other bereaved siblings do.

It is difficult for kids when the parents energy is wrapped up in the dead child. Inside they're screaming, "Look at me, I'm still alive."

The reality of death is that there is always remorse about things done or left undone.

Siblings can benefit from this painful experience. They may gain a different perspective on life, value it more highly, and adopt new priorities. They learn things that strengthen them and they tend to be more compassionate and sensitive than other young people.

**Karol Wendt
Milwaukee, WI**

A Part of Me

You were not just my brother, but
You were my friend as well.
You were supposed to be here always
Or till the world came to an end.
I know that we argued and
Seemed to disagree,
But I could always count on you
To be there for me.
You may be gone from this world I see,
But you will always be a part of me.

**Donna Montville
TCF, Gardner, MA**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



The following article was written by Donna Ellis, whose son, Rick, died by suicide in 1981.

She and her husband belong to the Kansas City, Missouri Chapter of TCF.

Historically, suicide has been both admired and punished. To the ancient Greeks, it was a good and admirable solution to life's problems. Later, Greeks and Romans condemned it as a crime against the state. The surviving members of a suicide's family were punished, fined, their property taken away. The Roman Catholic church during St. Augustine's life viewed suicide as a sin, refusing both funeral rights and burial on consecrated ground. Later, suicide was seen as a manifestation of insanity, and since insanity itself was viewed as shameful, suicide was also seen as something full of guilt and shame. Some of those feelings of blame or shame are carried over into today's thinking. Please allow me to share some of my own feelings on this subject.

We live in a "pleasure-oriented" society. Most persons do not care to discuss or hear about death in any form - much less suicide. Many of us have trouble communicating our pain and questions about death because our listeners feel that we are being "morbid." I think their basic feeling is fear. So none of us have experienced death first-hand and we're afraid of it. But those of us who have lost someone we love have come close to death and have a real need to discuss it, get it out into the open and deal with it.

Even to many of you who have lost children through other means, the thought of a child's suicide may make you feel fear, but we who have been there feel differently. At one meeting of the Kansas City chapter, Bill McKneely made the statement: "Unless you come to the place where you can treat a death by suicide no differently than any other kind of death - you haven't fully dealt with it." It shocked me at first because even I had preconceived ideas about suicide. I had felt that suicides occurred in families who were unloving, un-supporting, underprivileged, or unreligious and I felt a complete sense of loss as to why this should happen in our family. We met Keith Kockau on our first visit here to Compassionate Friends. Keith was the first of a number of parents who showed us that indeed suicide does occur in loving, supportive families. Suicide comes from within an individual, not caused by outside factors. If the warning signals are open - enough, thereby recognized, sometimes the suicide can be averted. Many potential suicides have difficulty expressing their common feelings, however, much less feelings of suicide. Their warning signals may be so veiled that it is almost impossible to be aware of them.

I guess my message is that we need to replace our fear with awareness.

To realize that we are all victims of our circumstances and that survivors of suicide deserve no more blame than any other survivor.

In our case, our son's death was unquestionably suicide. Our son was NOT insane.

In this time and place where most people consider a discussion of death or suicide gruesome or morbid, I have considered Compassionate Friends my sanctuary. I could, and can, come here and share my feelings by crying, discussing, helping, being angry, or laying a problem on you. Thanks, Compassionate Friends, for letting me get one more thing off my chest.

This article shows of the suffering and guilt that society insensitively/unknowingly adds to the parent who is already dealing with the terrible tragedy of their child's death. Through Compassionate Friends, we can learn to have more understanding and empathy.

WHEN GRIEF IS NEW

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

The first months and years after 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 that you have already begun to travel. You will find that it is a long journey - - and deceptively 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, TCF, Marshalltown, IA



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



BLESSINGS INSIDE SORROW

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love... without measure... fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then, too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder, are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you... for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved, and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted that they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me.. still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, and, somehow, we would survive and build on the ashes of our broken hearts. Building somehow in spite of our pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger, and we have not forgotten.

What a bitter lesson! Still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart... and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in the fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. In that difference lies the blessings inside our sorrow. We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. Even through our tears, we smile at the memories. We know that you are not completely gone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. Though I would trade these blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

Lisa R. Sculley
TCF, Jacksonville/Orange Park, FL

THE LIST OF FIRSTS TUGS AT THE HEART

How well I remember... the first time I mowed the grass after you died. I cried for three hours (that's how long it took to mow it alone)... the first time I heard the high school band you were in play (it was in the year after your death). Inwardly I screamed... outwardly silent tears rolled down my cheeks.

The first movie we went to, "Chariots of Fire" (we left crying before the movie was even half through)...the day your sister got her driver's license (She was 17 when she got it .she couldn't stand the thoughts of driving... that is how you died)... the first time your sister was 30 minutes late coming home while driving... (We were frantic... we called the friends she had gone out with... the state patrol.. .and the hospital. Once I got through ranting and raving at her, I fell apart)... the first time your mom and I were 30 minutes late coming home. (Your sister was as bad as we had been... did she ever let us have it!)

The first day of school, (seeing the bus go by, you wanted to drive a bus)... the first time I went fishing (I went to the same place we often went. To the place you caught your first trout. I cried more than I fished. I was glad I was the only person there) ... the first family reunion (I felt so isolated, so alone, so guilty.. .How could I go when you couldn't)... the first wedding we went to. Friends of yours. We felt so robbed.. my son would never know the joy of having a helpmate of having his own child)... the first funeral I went to (I sat in shock... the flowers, the casket, the funeral home. I was back at your funeral!). . .the first Christmas our doorbell rang and there stood one of your friends. It made me feel good that he thought so much of you that he would come to see us. His presence spoke highly of you". He has not missed a Christmas in seven years... the first time I sang again (I quit singing shortly after you died.) It took me four years to start back... there is still one song I can't sing.. .can't listen to... As I look over the list of firsts... my heartstrings are pulled anew. I still miss you son.

Jeff Johnson
TCF, Bradenton, FL

GRIEF AND THE SINGLE PARENT

The death of a child is an unanticipated, shocking, devastating event in any family. In the single parent home, the death of a child or children can be more difficult than in the two parent home. Families have a difficult enough time coping with this life passage - the added burden of making arrangements and paying expenses. When adults have gone through a life crisis like divorce, the stress of dealing with the necessary arrangements presents another barrier on the long road of restructuring the single's life. We may be on speaking terms with the ex-spouse and that is helpful to a point. Those who are not on speaking terms are faced with even greater stress. The emotional ties that at one time connected us to this child are no longer present, yet to many it points up the hurt of the past. Survivors search for something or someone to blame.



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
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106
- Sarah Commerford....**Timothy**, age 21, Homicide.....(508)429-9230



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

(continued from page 6)

On Your Birthday

Widows/widowers are confronted with compounded grief. Unfortunately, most of us do not get through life with only one crisis. Dealing with the past rekindles the hurts of the past. As parents, we would be well advised by the legal system and counselors to make an effort to be amicable and/or courteous to the ex-spouse; papers must be signed. Grandparents, siblings, relatives and friends are also in grief. We must deal with them all. Who can our remaining children turn to if not us for guidance through these crises? If you have a companion who has suffered this loss, be patient. If you are the parent who has lost a child, ask your companion to be patient with you. The grief process is longer than we knew it would be. To the non-bereaved parent, the grief process is longer than you can know. This life passage is not something we want for any of you. The death of a marriage is not comparable to the death of a child. Often the widow/widower or the divorced person may remarry. The loss of a child is not a void which can be filled. There are entirely different emotions to be dealt with.

Many of us survive but will forever have emotional scars. Stand by us and we will be forever grateful. Many of you have done that for me. Unfortunately, for several I am now trying to stand by you in your loss. In our singleness, as a friend, you are invaluable.

**Jacque Stockhausen
TCF, St. Louis, MO**

This morning when I woke up, I felt like I had been punched in the stomach. Four years. You would have been four years old today. I miss you terribly. How can it have been so long ago, that I first held you, and heard you cry? It seems like yesterday, and yet so long ago. It has been such a long time; I don't cry anymore. At least, that is what everyone thinks. How can I, after so many years, still feel the pain, so fresh, so strong, so near? How can I, after so many years, tell someone that I still hurt, the pain still exists; that I still cry?

I miss you, Joey. *Joey*. Just writing your name brings back memories. Laughter, joy, tears and pain. Mixed together, ebbing and flowing. Precious, those memories, bringing light into my night; carrying hope to my shattered soul. Buoying me up when I stumble, giving me direction when I am lost.

It sometimes seems as though everyone has forgotten, even though I know your memory is written indelibly on their hearts. No one could ever forget you that knew you, and many who never met you remember you still. And yet, I still feel alone in this journey for me. I must find my own way, while they find theirs. Sometimes we are on the path together; other times we are far apart.



(continued on page 8)



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 7)

And so on this day, I remember you. I long to hold you, to speak your name. But when I speak of you, who will listen? Who can? But I listen; I hear. I write my feelings to you, preserving the precious memories of this day. These are your memories, in place of hopes and dreams. Things that can never be given way to the things that are, preparing me for the things that will be. Your memories bring meaning to the present, and cast light on the future, giving the hope and strength to carry on. Thank you so much for the memories.

Lisa R. Sculley
TCF, Jacksonville/Orange Park, FL

TO BEREAVED GRANDPARENTS

I am powerlessness. I am helplessness. I am frustration.

I sit here with her and I cry with her. She cries for her daughter and I cry for mine. I can't help her. I can't reach inside and take her broken heart. I must watch her suffer day after day and see her desolation.

I listen to her tell me over and over how she misses Emily, how she wants her back. I can't bring Emily back for her. I can't buy her an even better Emily than she had, like I could buy her an even better toy when she was a child.

I can't kiss the hurt and make it go away. I can't even kiss a small part of it away. There's no bandaid large enough to cover her bleeding heart.

There was a time I could listen to her talk about a fickle boyfriend and tell her it would be okay, and know in my heart that in two weeks she wouldn't even think of him. Can I tell her it'll be okay in two years when I know it will never be okay? That she will carry this pain of "what might have been" in her deepest heart for the rest of her life?

I see this young woman, my child, who was once carefree and fun-loving and bubbling with life, slumped in a chair with her eyes full of agony. Where is my power now? Where is my Mother's bag of tricks that will make it all better?

Why can't I join her in the aloneness of her grief? As tight as my arms wrap around her, I can't reach that aloneness. Where are the magic words that will give her comfort? What chapter in Dr. Spock tells me how to do this? He has told me everything else I've needed to know. Where are the answers? I should have them. I'm the mother.



What can I give her to make her better? A cold wet wash cloth will ease that swelling of her crying eyes, but it won't stop the reason for her tears. What treat will bring joy back to her? What prize will bring that "happy child" smile back again? I know that someday she'll find happiness again, that her life will have meaning again. I can hold out hope for her someday, but what about now? This hour? this day?"

I can give her my love and my prayers and my care and my concern. I could give her my life. But even that won't help.

Margaret Gamer,
TCF, St. Louis Chapter

MENTION MY CHILD'S NAME

The best thing in your life is to have a child. They bring you so much love with each little smile. So much laughter and fun you have with them each day, but it all ends with sadness when they are taken away.

No one ever knows how we feel deep down inside or how many times each day we've sat there and cried, wondering why this has happened to our girl or boy who has given to us so much happiness and joy.

I love it when someone mentions my daughter's name.

There are so many who don't understand we will never be the same, but we do try to go on for all who love us so dear. And in our quiet moments we still shed a tear.

Our sorrow and sadness will just never go away. We hide most of our feelings to those who are with us each day. So many don't want to talk or even mention our child's name. They just do not realize how much we hurt and that is a shame.

But there are groups out there who do such a good deed, they give you the support and love that you really need. If you want to talk about your child or who is to blame, they will listen to you when you mention your child's name.

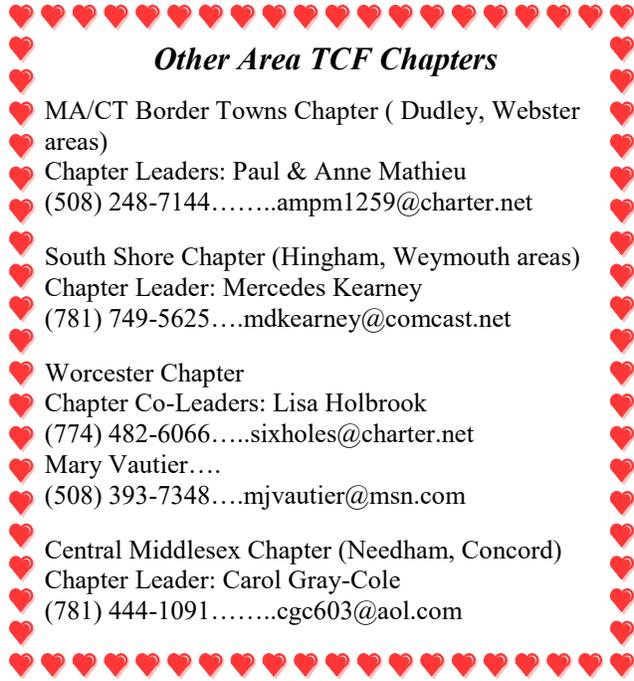
There are so many like you that really do care. For those who don't understand the hurt that we go thru, we hope and pray that it will never happen to you.

Jack Heil
Northeast Philadelphia Chapter/TCF
Philadelphia, PA





THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)
Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu
(508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net
- South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)
Chapter Leader: Mercedes Kearney
(781) 749-5625.....mdkearney@comcast.net
- Worcester Chapter
Chapter Co-Leaders: Lisa Holbrook
(774) 482-6066.....sixholes@charter.net
Mary Vautier....
(508) 393-7348.....mjvautier@msn.com
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole
(781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com

Quiet Moments, Loving Memories of a Son Never Gone.

No one ever told me that grief can make you feel so alone. I try to convince myself that I am not alone, but the sensation of loneliness lingers. So much of the time it feels as if there is an invisible shield which separates me from the rest of the world. I can be helped only so much by an intellectual answer. All I know is that it hurts.

When tragedy strikes a loved one it always seems to come upon you so quickly, so hard hitting and without warning. A late night telephone call from the police, a telegram from the war department or the results of a biopsy. It's impossible to adequately prepare for it even though you may have a hint that it is coming. With an overwhelming rush of suddenness the course of your life is interrupted, turned about and forever changed. Every minute, hour or day afterwards will be defined by the consequences. Life has been rearranged. You are forced to make painful adjustments to your priorities, your hopes and your plans. And the incredible truth is that no matter how much they may desire to help you, your friends do not walk in the same pair of shoes as you do and they can never fully understand what you are feeling.



As you struggle to cope, to make it back to the land of the living, you realize that the only real reservoir of strength that you can rely on is the quality and depth of your God-given spirit.

Soon you reach a crossroad where you must choose between two paths. Do you withdraw into the beckoning shell of fear and loneliness and remain mired in the quicksand of despair and defeat, or do you try to turn your defeat into a victory and get on with the business of living?

Ben Lambert
TCF, Lakes Region, NH

Nine Years or Nine Hundred

Sometimes it seems that nobody understands the pain of losing your child. "Well," they say, "it's been nine years, shouldn't you be over it by now? My parents died (or my cousin - or my dog,) And I did my grieving and got over it," they say. Nine years, it seems like only yesterday, and I remember the horror:

- The police knocking at the door in the middle of the night.
- Making funeral arrangements (funeral arrangements?) for my son.
- Asking his best friends — boys who were just yesterday playing ball and laughing with him — to be his pallbearers.
- That awful empty feeling in the pit of my stomach when the limousine from the funeral home; drove up to our house.
- Seeing his casket poised above the freshly-dug grave.
- Being pulled away from the graveside when the eternity of services was done.
- Waking up every morning for weeks and for a blessed split second thinking everything was right with the world, then the reality crashing in that he is dead.
- Fumbling my way, somehow, through the days and nights.

Yes, my friends, it's been nine years. And still it hurts to say his name.

To think what he might have been doing now with his life.

To realize what a waste of a young life it was. So, please, don't expect me to be "over it" or "okay."

Not in nine years
Or in ninety
Or in nine hundred.

Barbara Koontz Clarihew
for Steven Koontz, died June 9, 1979
TCF, Bucksmont Chapter



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



It Will Be Better

Recently a mother, whose child died about 2½ years ago, called, as she has done many times in the past few months. It was 9 PM and she wanted to know if I would meet her some place for an ice cream cone. She said she had something she wanted to tell me, and knowing that she usually calls only when the day is really bad, I quickly agreed to meet her. I expected to find a sad face, instead I found a smiling one.

It wasn't until we were sitting in her car eating our ice cream that she would tell me her news. She said, "You know, I didn't deal with the reality of my son's suicide for the first year and a half, but I have been coming to the Compassionate Friends meetings for the past seven months, and I have been in your group each time. You always say before the sharing group ends, 'Remember, it will be better.'



"I have always thought you said that because it had gotten better for you, but I didn't believe it would ever be better for me. My grief was different, I thought. I wanted you to meet me tonight because I wanted to share with you, in person, the news that as of today I believe it really will be better, and I do see the light at the end of the tunnel. I know that I will be depressed again (and she will) but I have had this day and I know now I will have it again."

She took a giant step forward without even so much as a "May I?" She asked me to do one thing for her, and I am doing that now. She wants me to keep telling you "It will be better." It won't ever be the same, but it will be better than now as you struggle with the pain of fresh grief. It happened for her and it will happen for you, too. IT WILL BE BETTER! Write that down.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Chapters, Atlanta, GA

We Are Your Organization

We are your organization. We ARE you. No better, no smarter, no more experienced, just fellow bereaved parents struggling along. Among our group are homemakers, bankers, teachers, office workers, attorneys, justices of the peace, police officers, waitresses... in short, the whole human spectrum. Just people, grieving parents who are trying to help themselves and others. No pat answers, no glib replies, no religion, no color, no judgments truly.

We ARE you. You may not know us all so well. Say nothing or say a lot. No barriers, no requirements, only the promise that whether you listen or lead, you will find genuine understanding and shared experiences. No need to spill your guts or bare your soul; just come to a meeting and realize that you are truly not alone in your grief and loneliness, in your anger and "craziness" and pain. We ARE you.

Linsey Maddex
TCF, Bryan, 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 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)
Janice Parmenter (Sub.)(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.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 10)

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

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

*Whoever has stepped outside his door,
already has a hard part of his journey behind.*
(anonymous)

I saw this quote the other day and thought it can certainly apply in many situations, but none more so than after the death of a child. The tendency to want to withdraw is a strong one. The world outside your door no longer seems a friendly and safe place. Whatever security blanket you had has been torn away, leaving you vulnerable and fragile like a pile of egg shells just waiting to be crushed.. Gone may be any assurances that you had about having a protective umbrella over your head because of the sheer goodness of your life or because you already had more than your share of hard knocks. You now know that bad things do, indeed, happen to good people, and umbrellas get holes in them.

There are times through all the pain of fresh grief when you need to be alone to do your private grief work. You need some days to be and do whatever meets your needs without the worry of the impact of your emotions on someone else. Not all the days, however, need to be spent in privacy for the "safety" of your home can be a double-edged sword. Privacy not only protects you from a society that does not understand, it also insulates you from the comfort of that special person who truly does understand and who can encourage you to know the pain won't always be this intense. Privacy takes away any opportunity you could have to better help yourself by helping someone else. It protects you not only from the pain, but also from whatever pleasure that is left out there for you.

As a bereaved parent, one of your greatest fears can be that everybody, in time, will forget that your child lived and died. Who out there is better able than you to see that this does not happen? Who out there is better able to assure that something meaningful will happen because your child lived and died? No one.

If you have become a recluse in an effort to protect yourself, recognize that there is no permanent protection for you there. Take that first step outside your door and put a larger part of your journey behind you. We hope that first step will be toward a Compassionate Friends meeting where you will find understanding friends who can encourage you to risk reinvestment in life not only for your sake, but also for the sake of those left who care for you, and for the memory of your dead child. It's never to late too start your journey.

Mary Cleckley
TCF, Atlanta, GA

DIDN'T I JUST THINK THAT?

PERHAPS YOU'VE HEARD SOMEONE SAY, "When are you going to get over your child's death?" or "You should just get on with your life."

What do they mean? As bereaved parents, our lives are going on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and we continue to care for our families, work, go to the movies, prepare dinners. We still do all the ordinary, daily things.

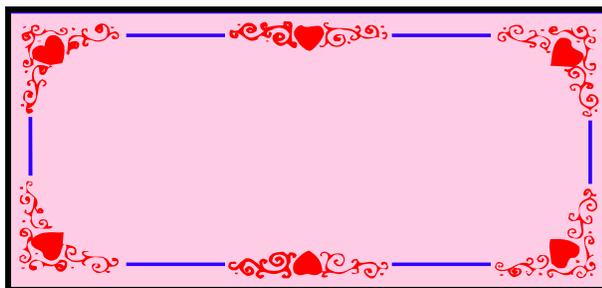
Do they really mean that I should never mention my deceased child's name again because it makes them feel uncomfortable? Strange how it's okay for other people to reminisce about their children's lives, but look unsettled when we do the same. People don't realize that we need to reminisce also - it verifies that our child lived. It lets the love out. They talk about their child's future - college, marriage, career, but when I say "I wonder what my son does in Heaven - I hope he isn't hassling God," they look stunned and want me to "get over" this.

We think about our children in death as we thought about them in life - pondering their whereabouts, their well-being. Our parental instincts and concerns continue. How can we tactfully educate without alienating others and still feel free to express ourselves? And, when appropriate, feel comfortable mentioning our child's name? Try to understand the discomfort of others, if they have not been touched by death as we have been. Let's gently thank them for allowing us to share our memories and our dreams, for parental love is never severed, even by death.



Nancy Green
TCF, Livonia, MI

The Compassionate Friends
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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.”*