



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

April 2010

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. You are not alone in your grief.

**Meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month** at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 235 Park Street, North Reading at 7:30 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

### Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

*The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.*

#### National Office:

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
P. O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
Toll-free: 877-969-0010  
PH: 630-990-0010  
FAX: 630-990-0246  
[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 4/5/10      **Two Groups Men/Wome**  
                 Reggie & Jeff/ Pat & Cindi
- 5/3/10      **Annual Pot Luck Supper and Balloon**  
                 **Release**

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### [www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org](http://www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org)

Thank you to our recent Web Site Sponsors - without our sponsors our website cannot be hosted. Please consider sponsoring the web site for a month in memory of your child. Contact Carmen Pope if you are interested in doing so, and help us keep our web site going.

*This month's website is sponsored  
in memory of:*

**Tom and Christopher Pope**

Never forgotten . . . always missed . . .  
forever loved.

We carry you in our hearts.

Love, Mom, Dad, Kelly, Dave

# Remembering Our Children

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## April Birthdays

Samantha Rose Baer  
grandaughter of Ruth & Martin Baer

Janelle Marie Garland  
daughter of Barbara Beal

Peter M Cassely Jr  
son of Peter & Nancy Cassely

Dominic Cordima  
son of Tom & Mary Cordima

James Steven (Jimmy) Corliss  
son of Linda Corliss

Anthony Ralph Cota Jr  
son of Anthony & Maria Cota

Jeanette Lee Glavin  
daughter of Cynthia Glavin

Thomas "Scott" Gray  
son of Laura Gray

Robert R Kerr  
son of Bob & Rosalie Kerr

Jeff Madden  
son of Claire Madden

Faith Pendleton  
daughter of Deniece Pendleton

David Conant Siljeholm  
son of Anita Siljeholm

Katarina Smiles Rodriguez  
daughter of Paulette Smiles



## April Angel Dates

Andrew Dargan  
son of Tod & Jane Dargan

Jennifer Gianocostas  
daughter of Skip & Diane Gianocostas (step-mom)

Jill Hartel  
daughter of Stephen Hartel & Lisa Alecci-Hartel

Devin John Henderson  
son of Lori & Barry Henderson

Eric Hill  
son of Peggy & Tom Hill

Ricardo Melo  
son of David & Theresa Mel

Eileen E Missett  
daughter of Ann Missett

Reid Robert Sacco  
son of Gene & Lorraine Sacco

Brian T Wilson  
son of Linda Wilson

As a regular feature, the newsletter is used to acknowledge the Birthdays and Anniversaries of the death of our children/siblings at the request of parents/siblings. Permission must be given for us to print your child's date. If the information is missing or not correct please send the correct data to: Cindi Bolivar, 28 Colburn Rd, Reading, MA 01867

Childs Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Angel Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

*All entries will be listed in the appropriate newsletter as accurately as possible. We are all grieving parents and mistakes can happen. Please let me know immediately if there is a problem and it will be corrected in the next issue*

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### From the Chapter Leader

Last summer, when my daughter was home from college, she was reading one of Jodi Picoult's novels, My Sister's Keeper. When I asked her about the book, she simply reported that she had enjoyed reading it, even though the story was very sad. I recently found time to read this novel, and, without going into too much detail, so as not to spoil the story, I will admit that I was very moved by Picoult's depiction of the myriad of emotions surrounding a family who experiences significant tragedy.

My tears were triggered repeatedly as I read this book; it was reminiscent of so many of the emotions I experienced after my son died, as well as those I have heard expressed over the years by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. The author creatively touched upon many of the emotions we struggle with when we mourn the loss of a child in the family, be it heartbreak, helplessness, guilt, anger, irrationality, or a sense of feeling insignificant. The unexpected ending also reinforced for me what so many of us have come to realize on the course of our grief journey, which is the fact that we have so little control over what happens in our lives.

Shortly after reading it, I was having a conversation with another bereaved parent. I told her about the book and about my emotional reaction to it. We agreed that, as time goes on, it can be more difficult to get in touch with our grief, which is both good and bad. Certainly, it is a good thing that our grief is not as all consuming as it was in the beginning and that we have progressed to the point where we do not dwell on it every day. However, we know that grief does not completely go away and continues to exist beneath the surface, no matter how good our lives may seem. We may avoid thinking about grief, because we know from experience how painful it is and we may consciously choose not to put ourselves in situations which will re-open those wounds. Avoiding our grief altogether as time moves forward might not be such a good thing. It is important to continue to recognize our emotions and to let the tears flow if needed, no matter how much time has elapsed since the death of our beloved children, grandchildren and siblings. That is why I am thankful for books such as My Sister's Keeper and tear jerker movies. They help me to pause, reconnect with my grief, and shed some tears, after which I can re-group and continue to move forward.

Wherever you are on your grief journey, please realize that your grief will continue to change as life goes on. On the whole, the pain softens, but it does not completely disappear. It sometimes waits just around the corner when you least expect it. When that happens, you must re-visit it for a while, until you are ready to move forward again, knowing that it will probably show its familiar face many times as you travel down this road.

Carmen

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### Letting Go

Not forgiving ourselves, not forgiving others, not forgiving, even when the whole world thinks we should, is a part of who we are. It is as natural to us as our defenses, our repression, our dissociation, our denial. No one is able to look at himself whole. No one is so evolved as to deal creatively with every loss and insult. No one is free from illusions about himself, positive and negative. No one is immune to the joys of victim-hood and revenge. We all have this in us. We are all enmeshed to some degree in our inner dramas and the unimaginable passions and loyalties they represent, which hold sway over us in ways that not even we can know. If we can see some of this in ourselves, accept it, be concerned about it, talk about it, it is less likely to control or overwhelm us. We will have a better chance to stay connected, to expand our zone of connection, to dissolve whatever scar tissue we can from a life of hurt and conflict, and move on to the goodness of love.

Robert Karen, Ph.D. The Forgiving Self: The Road from Resentment to Connection  
(Doubleday, 2001), page 279.

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### Spring Bursts Forth, and So Will You and You and You

Who could possibly disagree that we all look forward to spring? (For one thing, it means no more outrageously high fuel bills for a few months!) Most of all, we welcome all the evidence of new life after the seemingly endless cold, sometimes bleak and dreary days of winter. What a difference the new growth of leaves on the trees makes in the appearance of the landscape!! There is the sudden burst of color in all the spring flowers and shrubs – from the crocus to the beautiful array of colorful azaleas to the fragrant peonies that burst into bloom at the end of May. Somehow, all of this gives us a new burst of energy as we throw off our heavy, warm, restrictive clothing and grab our gardening tools to plant the vegetable gardens and flower beds. However, we still keep a sweater or a jacket close by for those times, now and then, which are too cool for comfort just yet.

So it is with us bereaved parents, for whom our whole world became a bleak, cold and desolate winter when a much-loved child was suddenly torn out of our lives. If you are at this point in your life now, then it is possible you may not be able even to be aware of all the beauty of the earth all around you now or in the summer or even in the gloriously colorful fall to come. If this is where you are now in your grief, be very patient with yourself. There are those of us who have gone through several springs without being aware of them. It was not even possible for us to smile, let alone laugh – and we were positive that we would never be able to do so. Does anyone remember the time he first laughed, as I do? It was at least six months after the death of my son, and I was visiting with a very close friend who made some comment which must have struck just the right chord within me, and I LAUGHED. It was such a shock to hear that sound come from ME that I actually reeled back in my chair and asked, unbelievably, “Did I do that?” For me, that was the first small burst of spring coming back into my life! But, of course, I still had a long way to go.

Be assured – there can be a spring in your life again! But you will have to work for it. It won't come if you just sit back and do nothing. Only *you* can be the judge of what it is you should do. Although you do have very special needs at this time and it is important not to push yourself beyond

the point of your endurance, it may be necessary in the beginning to force yourself moderately to begin the work of building a new life for yourself. Eventually, you, too, will feel the first small burst of spring coming back into your life. During this, time you will still need the protective covering of an understanding Compassionate Friend, as we sometimes need the protective covering of our jackets and sweaters on chilly nights in the spring.

In time you can be the Compassionate Friend helping other newly-bereaved parents. BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN, AND KNOW THAT YOU WILL.

Grace Remsber  
TCF - Harrisburg, PA

### Is Your Home Stressing You Out?

Your home - whether big, small, or somewhere in between - should be your sanctuary, a place where stress is left at the door and your soul is nurtured. For a more comforting environment, consider implementing the following:

- \* Bring the outdoors in. Green plants, cut flowers and blooming bulbs, or pieces of wood, rocks and other organic elements can create a feeling of nature indoors.
- \* Paint a room to suggest a mood. For instance, blue and green promote a relaxed feeling and may be good choices for the bedroom, while warm colors (maroon, coral, burgundy) suggest a cozy environment and may be inviting in a family room.
- \* Surround your senses with beauty. Artwork, fragrance, smooth textures and calming sounds all provide a pleasant environment in which to relax.
- \* Set aside a room or area for peace and calm. A place for spiritual reflection and meditation can provide shelter from noise and distraction.
- \* Clean out clutter. A low-maintenance home is refreshing after a day of hectic meetings, errands and chores. Fewer items can mean less frustration.
- \* Create an atmosphere of love. Display handmade or meaningful gifts from loved ones and photos of family and friends.

Dr. Andrew Weil - [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com)

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### The Sorrow of the Easter Lily

My mother (Lisa's grandmother) is buried in the old, historic City of Decatur cemetery. One springtime I told Lisa I was going there to clean the marker and put out fresh flowers. She wanted to come with me and together we scrubbed the white marble marker. Lisa's business suit didn't even slow her down as she scrubbed. I thought how nice it was to have her doing this task with me and imagined a future when she would be taking care of my grave.

On the way there she had wanted to stop off at a florist. She bought three beautiful white Easter Lilies. When the grave site was neat and clean, Lisa placed the lilies there and stood in reverence before her grandmother's grave. I wondered if she was sad because of a sweet grandmother who had died too soon. Then she did a strange thing ... she sat down behind the marker and put her head in her hands and cried. I didn't think she was crying for a grandmother who had died when she was only 5 years old. She barely remembered her. I sat down beside her and put my arm around her and held her while she cried. Not wanting to intrude, I did not ask why she wept. I hoped she would confide in me, but she did not.

Two years later, I buried her there beside her grandmom ... the place where I thought I would be someday. Her reason for weeping that day will always be one of those haunting "Why's" for me. I will forever wonder why she cried. Did she have some insight this would happen? Did she have some foreknowledge of her own death? If only I could return to the day, I would tell her not to cry and not to be afraid. I would do everything in my power to protect her from her fate. As it is, I try to enjoy the fragrance and beauty of the Easter Lily, but it brings back the vision of my beautiful angel weeping at her own soon-to-be grave.

Faye Martin, Lisa's mom forever  
Marietta Chapter, GA

### TCF No Shore-Boston Annual Pot Luck Supper and Balloon Release

**May 3, 2010**

Our annual Pot-Luck supper will be held this year on our regular meeting night in May (Monday, May 3rd). We will begin the evening with a brief ceremony and balloon release at 6:30 PM, followed by a pot luck supper.

Our chapter Pot Luck Supper has been a popular annual event and we look forward to seeing many of our current and past members in May. This is a wonderful opportunity to share on a more personal level with other members. You are invited to bring a picture of your child to share with the group. We will also have our usual monthly birthday table available for those children with May birthdays.

We will provide one balloon for every family in attendance. There will also be markers available for you to write your child's name and/or a special message to your child on the balloon.

Some members have already volunteered to bring food items. There will be a sign up sheet for additional food items at the April meeting. If you are unable to attend that meeting and would like to attend the Pot Luck Supper event, please RSVP to Cindi at [Newsletter@tcfno-shore-boston.org](mailto:Newsletter@tcfno-shore-boston.org) or 781-944-0016, or Carmen at [Connect@tcfno-shore-boston.org](mailto:Connect@tcfno-shore-boston.org) or 978-750-4043. It is helpful for us to know ahead of time how many people to expect and what you are planning to contribute to the supper. All hot meals should be brought ready to serve – we do not have the resources to reheat food. We will need salads, main courses and desserts. Beverages and paper goods will be provided by the Chapter. We look forward to seeing you there and are grateful for any assistance you provide in helping us to coordinate this event.

# Chapter Sharing Pages

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## TELEPHONE FRIENDS



Our telephone friends are here to help you if you feel the need to connect with someone outside of our usual meeting night. We are not professionals - we are all bereaved parents seeking to find a way through our grief.

**Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.**

Billerica	Jeff Moore, son 17, moped accident	978-663-8539
Danvers	Carmen Pope, infant son, anencephaly; 11 year old son, boating accident	978-750-4043
Andover	Steve Hartel and Lisa Alecci, daughter ,6, leukemia	978-470-2323
Plaistow, NH	Lynne Jeffries, son, 4, drowning	603-382-4134
Rockport/Cape Ann	Jim and June McCloy, son, 32, complications during bone marrow transplant	978-546-7634
Lynn	Pat Karakashian, son, 29, Drug Overdose	781-593-5875
North Reading	Margo Vogis, son, 20, automobile accident	978-664-0688
North Andover	Catherine Olson, daughter,27, pedestrian accident	978-681-8341
Marshfield	Trudy Seveir, daughter, 27, suicide	781-837-3171
Cambridge	Lin Campbell, daughter, 23, drug overdose	617-576-9290
Woburn	Alaina Huxtable, grandson 4, accident	781-933-6845
Lynn	Gladys Nelson, son 24, cancer, special needs	781-595-4124
Winchester	Maureen McCormack, son 20, drowning	781-729-1878
Malden	Marnie Smithers, son 13, ATV Accident	781-322-1722

### The Newsletter – Online?

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email instead of through the postal system, please send your name and email address to [newsletter@tcfnoshore-boston.org](mailto:newsletter@tcfnoshore-boston.org). An abbreviated version of the newsletter is also posted on our web pages for your viewing.

### UPDATING OUR MAILING LIST

Please fill out and return this form as soon as possible:

I do  do not  wish to continue receiving this newsletter.

NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent, Sibling, or Grandparent

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional

**If you have not attended a meeting or contacted us in the past year**, but still want to continue receiving the newsletter, please consider making a donation to help cover newsletter costs. Suggested donation: \$10.

Send to: **TCF No.Shore-Boston**  
**PO BOX 1117**  
**Billerica, MA 01821-0961**

Find a little time for Spring  
 even if your days are troubled.

Let a little sunshine in,  
 let your memories be doubled.

Take a little time to see  
 all the things your child was seeing

And your tears will help your heart  
 Find a better time for being.

-Sascha Wagner

Though memories can at first be painful in time they will soften and become the treasures of your heart. Like beautiful flowers long ago pressed in a book they will bring the best moments of life from the past into the present for a little while, memntarily reconnecting your life with others.

Fay Harden, Heartlines

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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# LOVE NOTES



*In Loving Memory of Brian Cumming. A Loving son and brother*

*In Loving Memory of our son, Andy Gelyookian. Four years have passed since your battle was lost. Your bravery and love of life was admired by all. We miss you every day. Love, Mom & Dad.*

*In Loving Memory of Anthony R. Cota, Jr. Love, need and miss you! Love, Mom & Dad.*

*In Loving Memory of Jimmy Corliss. You're always in my thoughts. I wish every day that you were here to laove and enjoy. Love, Mom*

*In Loving Memory of our daughter Patricia "Patty" Kingston. Thinking of you, Happy Easter 2010. Love, Mom & Dad*

## TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. 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 that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different we really do understand. You are not alone

## TO OUR OLDER MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back.... remember hearing from others farther along than you...“your pain will not always be this bad it really does get better” Come to the meetings and share your wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.

## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NorthShore/Boston Chapter  
PO BOX 1117  
Billerica, MA 01821-0961

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIALS  
PLEASE FORWARD



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**  
North Shore-Boston Chapter

NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2010



National Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

\*\*\*\*\* CHAPTER WEBSITE: [www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org](http://www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org) \*\*\*\*\*

Help us save money and paper.....

To receive these newsletters via email please send an email to the editor.