



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

August 2011

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 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday 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:

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

AUGUST BEGINS 2 MEETINGS PER MONTH

- 8/1/11 Sharing Precious Memories
8/17/11 **NEW MEETING NIGHT: Open Sharing Session**

9/5/11 Exploring the Grief Process (**Labor Day**)
9/21/11 **NEW MEETING NIGHT: Open Sharing Session**

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This month's website is sponsored in memory of:

Andrew Geljookian

You will always be remembered for
Your sense of humor, Your determination
Your compassion and kindness
Your spirit lives on.....
Forever in our thoughts, Forever in our hearts

Dearly missed by Mom, Dad & Mike,
your many friends and family

Brianna Lee Paul (Bri)

From the day you could speak you roared
Angelic curls and a smoky voice
From the day you took flight you soared
Landing only when forced, never by choice
When death chooses one so vibrant and bold
It seems to mock our reason to be
But life and death could never hold
Nor extinguish the power of Bri

Love you always, Mom, Dad, Erin and Eden

Our Children Remembered



August Birthdays

Andrew Geljookian son of Nancy & John Geljookian
Eric Hill son of Peggy & Tom Hill
Glenn James McCloy son of June and Jim McCloy
Cynthia A. Moores daughter of Art and Barbara Moores
Brianna Lee Paul daughter of David & Melinda Paul
Adriana Schettino daughter of John & Roseanne Schettino
Victor Vogis son of Victor and Margo Vogis



August Angel Dates

Derek Anthony Broughton son of Edward and Louise Broughton
Aaron Daniel Carey son of Jim & Rachel Carey
Jason Foster son of Michelle Foster
Steven Michael Kerr son of Bob and Rosalie Kerr
Gale McLaughlin daughter of Joan & Frank McLaughlin
Jeannie O'Hare daughter of Jean and Tom O'Hare
Michael John Smithers son of Marnie Smithers

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 Childs Name: _____
28 Colburn Rd,
Reading, MA 01867 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

From the Chapter Leader

Summer is definitely upon us, finally. For those of us who are recently bereaved, the changing seasons can be especially hard. During the first year without our child, each seasonal change brings new reminders that they are no longer with us. Over the years, as we continue to go through these yearly cycles, the reminders get less strong and painful, but they still come up to surprise us. During the summer, my son Joel loved spending time at the beach, climbing trees (and anything else he could find to climb) and going to the playground with his friends. When I see children at play, I'm often reminded of those days. It's strange because he never outgrew those things, since he was eight when he died. So many of my memories are about this exuberant, energetic child who enjoyed life to the fullest while he was with us.

During the July meeting, one of the questions was about how to remember our children without it being too painful. In the beginning, we are afraid we will forget our child, or the memories we have of them. When we think about them we feel joy, but it is quickly replaced by equally deep feelings of loss, and the associated tears. This is our time of deepest mourning, and tears are a natural part of the process. If we allow ourselves to mourn, we will eventually find some healing. It is a difficult process, but our loved ones usually understand. If they are having trouble relating to our needs, or try to make us feel better before we are ready, we may have to tell them that this is what we need to do right now. Because our loss is so personal, we are willing to feel more deeply, and other family members may not be experiencing the same level of emotions. This is normal, because they were not as close to our child as we are. In my own experience, I found that I shared a common depth of understanding with my husband and surviving son. We all missed Joel because he was no longer part of our daily routine. We were able to talk about him and mourn together.

To encourage other family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins to remember our child, we might ask them to contribute to a memory book by writing about some of the unique interactions they had with our child. When you have completed the book, you could share it at a family gathering. Right after Joel's accidental death, a friend suggested that I write down everything I could remember about my son. It was such a relief to do this, because once it was

written down, I no longer feared that I would forget him. A scrapbook or memory box is another way to keep special mementoes. I have various items that belonged to Joel, and most are quite small. A special action figure, some crystals and marbles that he collected, sea shells, rocks, a stuffed animal, some favorite t-shirts and some of his school craft projects and papers.

Our August meeting is for sharing precious memories, so please be sure to bring some of those items. You will have a chance to talk about why your child was special to you and to the other people in their (and your) life. I wish you peace and time to remember these treasured gifts from our children.

Mariann

"We are unutterably alone, essentially, especially in those things that are most important to us."

Rainer Maria Rilke, from Letters to a Young Poet



Chapter Library

The North Shore/Boston Chapter has an extensive collection of grief related books and magazines which are available at each meeting for our members to borrow. We would like to remind anyone who has taken out materials from our library to kindly return them so they will be available for our new members, either by dropping them off at a meeting or by mailing them to:

TCF North Shore/Boston Chapter
c/o Aldersgate United Methodist Church
235 Park Street
North Reading, MA 01864

Chapter Sharing Pages

Patience and Permission

I have a friend who is going back to Pennsylvania next week for this father's funeral. His father died this past winter, at which time bad weather and the frozen ground made it impossible for the family to conduct a burial service.

I told Bruce that I would keep him and his family in my heart during this time and I told him that I can't imagine how difficult this must be for them all.

I know how hard it is to walk the road of the death of someone I loved, through the common ritual of a wake, funeral, and a burial. My daughter's death was the hardest thing I have ever had to bear. If there is any consolation I can take from that experience and compare it to Bruce's situation, it is that I got to do everything I had to do at one time. Months have passed for Bruce and his family, and now they have to open it all up again to go through a funeral and a burial.

I miss my daughter every day. I imagine her participation in and reaction to things that are happening today. Her best friend is expecting a baby and I've been invited to a baby shower. My daughter should be there. I see motorcycles on the road and imagine my daughter riding hers to an adventure and hearing all about the fun she had.

Grief and healing experts and those seasoned by the deaths of their children told me that grieving my daughter's death would be the hardest work I would ever do. I didn't believe them at first, but as time passes and I do the hard work, I understand what they tried to tell me. I know they were right.

My daughter died 19 months ago. Most days I rise and move through the day with my own kind of grace and ease. She is with me and my heart sings with gratitude that I am her mother and that we are together—even as we are apart.

Other days are tough and some are filled with deep pain that paralyzes me. I know now that the hard time will come and that the only thing I can do is to let it in and let it be. Fighting the grief and the anger only makes it more difficult to handle.

I continue to learn how to be patient with myself and understand my limits. I find that when I respect myself during these hard times, it is a little easier to give myself permission to grieve my terrible loss. Patience and permission are the keys to how I will survive.

Penny Richards
TCF No Shore Boston



But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough
- been sleeping too much or not enough
- noticed a change in appetite
- felt no one understands what you're going through
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often
- bought things you didn't need
- considered selling everything and moving
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains
- been unbearable, lonely, and depressed
- been crabby
- cried for no apparent reason
- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded
- panicked over little things
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done
- gone to the store every day
- forgotten why you went somewhere
- called friends and talked for a long time
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written material
- been unable to remember what you just read ...you're normal. These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

Joanne Bonelli
TCF, Greater Boise Area, ID

Chapter Sharing Pages

	<p>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.</p> <p>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.</p>	
Beverly	Carmen Pope, infant son, anencephaly; 11 year old son, boating accident	978-998-4087
Billerica	Jeff Moore, son 17, moped accident	978-663-8539
Cambridge	Lin Campbell, daughter, 23, drug overdose	617-576-9290
Lynn	Pat Karakashian, son, 29, drug Overdose	781-593-5875
Marshfield	Trudy Sevier, daughter 27, suicide	617-791-0439
Malden	Marnie Smithers, son 13, ATV Accident	781-322-1722
North Andover	Catherine Olson, daughter 27, pedestrian accident	978-681-8341
North Reading	Margo Vogis, son, 20, automobile accident	978-664-0688
Reading	Reggie & Cindi Bolivar, son 22, automobile accident	781-944-0016
Winchester	Maureen McCormack, son 20, drowning	781-729-1878
Melrose	Wayne Patick, son 22, suicide; intentional heroin overdose	781-622-9094
Everett	Steve Robinson, daughter 24, domestic violence	508-728-4040
Campton, NH	Melinda & David Paul, daughter, 20, sudden cardiac arrest	603-726-8190

From the editor – help wanted.

After the death of a child our lives are forever changed and as we journey through the path of grief, we find that when we do begin to emerge on the “other side”, we are not the same person we were before this horrible, almost unspeakable trauma drove us to despair. We do manage to learn to live again, dare to laugh again, and even find a way to find joy in our lives again. We find our way to new beginnings, new ways of doing things, and possibly doing things we may not have dared to try before.

For me it has been almost 10 years since we lost our only son Joey in a single moment that forever changed our lives. The last nine years have been a journey that I would never in a million years have thought I would be able to make, but I am doing it and have emerged on the other side of that deep dark pit to find new beginnings.

One new beginning for me was taking over this chapter newsletter about 8 years ago. It has been a healing path for me and I hope for many of our parents as well.

The newsletter is a project with several different parts and I am looking for one or two more people to help with this monthly project.

The first step is to research and find the different pieces that will “fit” together to make the newsletter complete. Thanks to Marianne in the past and now Penny I have the extra “eyes” helping to find just the right pieces each month.

The next step is to put it all together and make it fit on the pages. Once ready, the copy is sent off to the printer using an on-line print service.

The last step is to pick up the hard copies, fold, tab, label and stamp them and finally put them in the mail. This last step takes about an hour with 2 people working together and is often done while watching TV.

At this time, I would like to find someone to help with the last step. This would involve picking up the hard copy from the printer or my house. You would need to purchase mailing labels and tabs (available at the Kinko’s stores) and stamps. You will need to print the labels – I will send the formatted document for the labels via email.

If any of our readers feel that they are ready to take on something new and help with the chapter newsletter please contact me directly either by phone at 781-944-0016 or email: cinbol@gmail.com (best method).

Cindi

Chapter Sharing Pages

Daisies in Huge Handfuls

"Pick more daisies" was the most popular expression in our family. I picked it up from a magazine article about a 94 year old lady in Kentucky who, when asked what she would do differently if she had her life to live over, responded "I would take more chances; I would eat more ice cream and less beans; I would have more real troubles but fewer imaginary ones; I would climb more mountains; I would swim more rivers, and I would pick more daisies."

Our son, Mark, seized the daisy expression as the theme both for his life and his entrance exam essay at UCLA. It helped him live his brief 18 years; his essay helped him get an academic scholarship.

Daisies became our family flower. They marked our attitude about living. And they marked our son's memorial service. After it was over, his friends and fraternity brothers each threw a daisy into the ocean. Daisies still mark his grave every week. It has taken me almost two years to return to really thinking about daisies and what that quote by a 94-year-old lady really means. During that time I made a pretty big mess of things. I did the best I could, but I was often going through the motions outside, but empty inside.

To me, what this quote means is we really do have to pull ourselves together again and go on. Dr. Charles Heuser, a former pastor at our church, notes "going through the steps of grief is like walking through the valley and shadow of death. Keep walking, but don't camp there."

Our children would not want us to "camp there," but to go pick more daisies—to somehow live an even more meaningful life in their name. As I go on I am truly a different person. I don't suffer fools or superficiality very well any more. As one of my best friends said..."I get tired of beige people." Yet, I will drop everything to help another bereaved parent. I certainly have more "real troubles and fewer imaginary ones." But it's OK—I like myself better that way.

And I am returning to embrace life each day again. But this time I am following my heart instead of my expected career. I am taking more chances,

climbing more unfamiliar mountains, and picking daisies in huge handfuls.

Mark would want it so

Rich Edler, TCF South Bay, CA
In Memory of my son Mark Edler



On Pain and Healing...

In pain management used for patients with chronic pain, it is taught not to tighten around the pain but to relax and allow the pain to be present. The idea is that when pain is resisted, it intensifies. When we breath deeply and acknowledge the presence of pain, it has room to move and can dissipate more readily. Pain is there to tell us something, to warn us of possible danger. This is as true for emotional, spiritual and mental pain as it is for physical pain. When pain speaks, we need to listen. All it takes is paying attention to our pain so that when it comes we remember to breathe and get soft. We don't want to fight with our pain. We want to learn from it.

Time does not heal. But healing does take time. Give yourself the gift of time. To become whole means that as we open to the pain, we open to the loss. We break open and, as a consequence, we get bigger and include more of life. We include what would have been "lost" to us if our hearts and minds had closed against the pain, we include what would have been lost if we had not taken the time to heal. As singer/songwriter Carly Simon tells us: "There's more room in a broken heart."

From the chapter, "Time Does Not Heal All Wounds," of the book, "Good Grief," by Deborah Morris Coryell

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



From John & Elaine Kingston. In Loving Memory of our daughter Patricia "Patty" Kingston. Thinking of you today and always. Love Mom & Dad

From The Frechette Family. In loving Memory of Christian E. Frechette

From John & Linda Pace. In loving Memory of Keith A. Pace.

From Margo & Victor Vogis. In Loving Memory of Victor G. Vogis. Happy Birthday Sweetheart, still missing you after all these years. Love, Mom, Dad, Katya, Ester, Tony & Margo Marie, Yiayia & Papou

From James & June McCloy. In Loving Memory of Glenn James McCloy. We will always miss you. Love, Mom & Dad

From Marnie Smithers. In Loving Memory of Michael John Smithers, 8th Anniversary. We think of you each and every day. We love & miss you more than words can say. I love you most buddy. Love, Mum & Chanel

From Jean O'Hare. In Loving Memory of Jeannie & her Dad, Tom O'Hare. We all miss you both, forever in our hearts. Love Mom, Jean, Deirdre, Tom & John

PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Please send your Love Notes and donations by mail to TCF No Shore/Boston, PO BOX 1117, Billerica MA 01821. (do NOT send them to the editor), or give them to the leader at the monthly meetings. Please use the form below to assure notes are posted exactly as you want them.

Love Notes must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the month you want the note published.

Love Gifts for future dates may be sent at any time – month to be published: _____

Love Gift from _____ In memory of _____

Message: _____

Chapter Sharing Pages

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 SEASONED 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 – August 2011



National Website: 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 *****

Help us save money and paper.....
To receive these newsletters via email please send an email to the editor.