



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

February 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.*

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Toll-free: 877-969-0010  
PH: 630-990-0010  
FAX: 630-990-0246  
[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- 2/1/10**      **Grieving as a Couple / Grieving as a Single or Divorced Parent - (2 groups)**  
Cindi & Reggie / Jeff and Maureen
- 3/1/10**      **Anger / Guilt / Forgiveness**  
Scott & Marnie

**NEW INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:**  
**In the event of inclement weather necessitating the closing of North Reading public schools, our chapter meeting will also be cancelled.**

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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:*

*Andrew Wilder*

*Always in our hearts  
Love, Mom, Dad and Doug*

If you are interested in sponsoring the web site for a month please contact Carmen Pope – we currently need sponsors for the following months: Apr, May, June, Jul, Aug, Oct, Nov and Dec

# Remembering Our Children

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## February Birthdays

Andrew Adams Wilder  
son of Mark and Betty Wilder

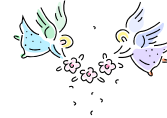
Daniel Noah Fine (Danny)  
son of Gail and Stephen Fine

Gale McLaughlin  
daughter of Joan & Frank McLaughlin

Jonathan Dean Trefry  
son of Phyllis Gorman

Mark Jason VanGorder  
son of Susan and Michael Flynn

Matthew Kane  
son of Regina & Bill Kane



## February Angel Dates

Antonio Iacopino Jr  
son of Marie McGregor

Christopher Burke  
son of Dotty and David Burke

Christopher Walker  
son of Bridget & Joseph Walker

Eric Kronk  
son of Kathy and Walter Kronk

James Anthony Keen  
son of Nina Keen O'Connor

Matthew Kane  
son of Regina & Bill Kane

Robert Joseph Biondo  
son of Lorraine Biondo

Ryan Beaudet  
son of Claude and Judy Beaudet

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. Information needs to be received by the **15th of the month prior to the issue** when you want your child remembered.

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*

*When you are sorrowful  
look again in your heart,  
and you shall see  
that in truth  
you are weeping for that  
which has been your delight.  
From The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran*

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### Love Never Goes Away

By Darcie D. Sims

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable some day.

TIME, the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child, the first word, first tooth, first date, first car. Now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief, it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child, HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us. It still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

*From TCF Atlanta Online*



I give you this one thought to keep –  
I am with you still – I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glints on snow,  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift, uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not think of me as gone –  
I am with you still – in each new dawn.

- Native American Prayer -

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### Picking Up The Pieces

By Linda Flatt  
Henderson, Nevada

Our lives are much like a very large jigsaw puzzle with thousands of pieces - each piece representing a relationship or an event. Significant people (close relationships) and meaningful experiences occupy more pieces of the puzzle and as those relationships change, so does the puzzle.

In my case, over the years, a twenty six-year marriage and two growing children filled large defining pieces in the puzzle of my life. As the children matured and began to build their own puzzles, and when the marriage ended, the picture of my life changed dramatically. Adjusting to an empty nest and recovering from a divorce resulted in a shift in quite a few puzzle pieces, but the overall picture remained intact.

On June 29, 1993, my life was shattered by the suicide of my twenty five- year-old son, Paul. As I worked to put the pieces back together, I began to realize that my life had changed. The pieces of the puzzle no longer fit the way they had before the suicide. The reality was that there would never be any more "Paul" pieces. Paul was no longer physically present in my life and, because of the circumstances of his death, I would never be the same. All I had left of my son was the memory I carried in my heart and in my head. It was now up to me to heal from my emotional injuries, adjust to my loss, and restore my energy and my life.

With God's help and the support of loving family and friends, I have reconstructed the puzzle of my life, and I am once again whole. Though forever changed by a suicide, I am determined to make those changes positive forces in my life. I have survived - and I am stronger than ever before!

*Bereavement Magazine September/October 2003*

### On Losing a Child

Face your feelings  
Don't let them hide inside.  
Confront the pain  
Give it a name,  
Let it roam your heavy heart.

Each teardrop you shed  
becomes a crystal bead  
to be added to your chain of sorrow.  
Keep the chain.  
Wear the beads with pride -  
A badge of your courage  
in facing the pain.

Face whatever may come.  
Accept and be thankful  
for the lessons you have learned.  
Stay open to your feelings.  
Soon the pain will be mixed with other colors.  
You will be weaving a new tapestry.  
Each strand of emotion adds richness.

Stay in the present moment.  
Look to the past to fathom the future.  
Keep one foot in the present  
and the other in eternity.

I have children in both worlds.  
I am attentive to each for their lessons.  
We learn from our children.  
They are our blessings.  
By doing for our children  
we are enriched by them.  
It does not end when they leave this earth.

We understand not with our minds,  
But with our hearts.

Mariann Lindquist  
In memory of Joel

## Chapter Sharing Pages

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### Not Another Flower

There was a day when the sun ceased to shine. You may have missed it; it didn't make the headlines of any national paper. February 2, 1997, to most, was only Groundhog Day. For me, it was nothing as trite as whether the furry creature did or did not see his shadow. Forget the promise of spring, what did it matter now? My life as I dreamed it stopped when my four-year-old laid lifeless in my arms.

How I remember those early months after his death. I wanted to be like my Victorian ancestors and wear black, even a veil. Then my clothes could shout to my neighbors, those in the grocery store lines, and the many at church -- look at me, I am a parent doing the impossible: living without her child.

I remember those who helped us as we put one foot in front of the other on the rocky path. My husband, three children, and I couldn't walk it alone. Friends, with embraces as strong and wide as eagle wings, circled us, cried with us. They brought meals, sent cards, provided listening ears, and took care of our young children.

Then there were those uncomfortable with our grief. During the first weeks they joined our tears, but as the months dragged on, their expressions and subtle hints were shouting, "Get back to normal. Look at the joyous side of life. Heal your broken heart!" For some reason, as you may know, people put a timeline on grief. I think the general consensus is that you're only allowed two to three weeks of sorrow.

When you are new to grief, even simple tasks can be laborious. Your energy and patience levels are low. But hear a comment or two that is completely out of line for anyone to say, and suddenly, you are propelled by anger. How can I forget the older lady in our church that called me every day for two weeks? She'd start off by asking how I was doing. My guts felt like they were stripped out of my body and my heart, mangled. I'd say, "It's hard."

One afternoon this woman told me with all the sincerity she could muster, "God needed another flower in his garden in heaven and took Daniel." I nearly dropped the phone. This was supposed to provide comfort? I eventually did hang up, but politely. My frustration flared. I got a lot of laundry done that afternoon -- throwing clothes into the washing machine, banging the lid shut, flinging socks and shirts into the dryer.

I am bolder now. When people tell me certain lines, aimed to help me and they don't work, I let them know. My new mantra is, "Cry with me. Don't pretend you understand why my child died. Don't try to rationalize why my son was diagnosed with cancer at the age of three and died at four."

Those who have helped are the ones who continue to remember his birthday and think of how hard it is to live the holidays without him. I appreciate the friends who join me at the cemetery, named by my children "Daniel's Place", and lift a helium balloon into the sky with me. Watch it soar.

I believe my son is vibrant and alive in Heaven now. I hope the balloon reaches him. Don't tell me it pops when it gets out of sight. Let me be like a child and not know the laws of the stratosphere. Let me wish he knows how much I love and miss him. Let me believe he is alive and touching the face of God.

The sun does shine again in my world. Although the hole in my mother's heart is always present, I'm grateful for the times I can tell Daniel's story. Remembering him, writing about him, even sharing his jokes with those I meet, brings healing.

I place flowers at his grave. But Daniel is not another flower.  
~ By Alice J. Wisler

## 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

### Hope in the Face of Death

Hope and beautiful memories. Hope brings us new possibilities. It opens dead-end streets, it allows for change, and in change it creates new alternatives. Hope encourages optimism. It assures us that, although situations aren't how we would like them to be, circumstances could change for the better. Hope has changed societies, developed science and enhanced life since the beginning.

Happily, the human mind has a way of storing beautiful moments...This forms a storehouse of memories that is always there to call upon, even at times of extreme despair.

--Leo F. Buscaglia  
Reprinted from South LA Bay TCF Jan/Feb 2003 Newsletter

### Like a Tree in Winter

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves, we look ahead to spring for new growth and the warmth of the sun to heal the pain in our hearts. Let us make these winter months a time to reach out to each other and give that warmth from our hearts and in return, We will all show new growth.

Kansas City Region Newsletter, Jan/Feb 2004

*Death leaves a heartache  
no one can heal,  
Love leaves a memory  
no one can steal. ~*

Found on a headstone in Ireland



# LOVE NOTES



*In Loving Memory of our daughter Patricia "Patty" Kingston. Thinking of you and wishing you a Happy New Year 2010. Love Mom & Dad*

*In Loving Memory of Tom O'Hare & Jeannie O'Hare, the husband and daughter of Jean O'Hare. Don & Barbara Cook*

*In Loving Memory of Christopher Walker. We miss you so much! Love you, Daddy, Mommy, and Joey*

*In Loving Memory of Michael P. Amorella. Happy Birthday. Love, Mom and 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 – FEBRUARY 2010

**NEW INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY: In the event of inclement weather necessitating the closing of North Reading public schools, our chapter meeting will also be cancelled.**



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.