



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

January 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 1st 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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 1/4/10 **How Our Relationships with Others Are Affected** - Carmen & Reenie
- 2/1/10 **Grieving as a Couple / Grieving as a Single or Divorced Parent** - (2 groups)
Cindi & Reggie / Jeff and Maureen

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.

Chapter Leader: Carmen Pope 978-750-4043
connect@tcfnoshore-boston.org
Newsletter Editor: Cindi Bolivar 781-944-0016
28 Colburn Rd
Reading, MA 01867
newsletter@tcfnoshore-boston.org
Research Assistant: Mariann Lindquist
Regional Coordinator: Rick Mirabile 781-740-1135
Rmirabile@comcast.net

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:
Jonathan
Forever in our hearts
Love Mom, Dad and Sam*

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

Remembering our Children



January Birthdays

Heather Johnson
daughter of Susan Barry & Dennis Johnson

Steven John Connolly
son of Brenda and Bob Connolly

Jill Hartel
daughter of Stephen Hartel and Lisa Alecci-Hartel

Todd MacDonald
son of John and Janet MacDonald

Antonio Iacopino Jr son of Marie McGregor

Eileen E Missett daughter of Ann Missett

Daniel M. Scafidi son of Martin Scafidi

Nathan Christopher McMahon
son of Denise Thibeault McMahon



January Angel Dates

Janelle Marie Garland daughter of Barbara Beal

Suzanna Lynne Campbell
daughter of Lynn & Scott Campbell

Courtney Marie Corning
daughter of Ginny & Jack Corning

Mark Jason VanGorder son of Susan and Michael Flynn

Daniel P Goggin son of Susan & Maurice Goggin

Aram Karakashian son of Pat and Garo Karakasian

Shane Lambert grandson of Irene Lambert

Kaleigh Lambert granddaughter of Irene Lambert

Joseph Matthew Liguori son of Marie Liguori

Joel Wesley Lindquist son of Roy and Mariann Lindquist

Jonathan Corey
son of Reenie McCormack and Ron Corey

Sean Warren McLaughlin
son of Mary and Joe McLaughlin

Patrick James Murphy son of Brian & Jeanne Murphy

Karen Ann Muscovitz
daughter of Arnie and Alice Muscovitz

Deirdre Helene Olson daughter of Catharine Olson

Brianna Lee Paul daughter of David & Melinda Paul

Glenn Buttrick son of Heidi Scott

Victor Vogis son of Victor and Margo Vogis

Katy Warde daughter of Peg Warde

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

Chapter Sharing Pages

From the Chapter Leader

A couple of months ago, I had the opportunity to participate in a panel presentation with two other members of our chapter before a group of graduate nursing students at the Massachusetts General Institute of Health Professions who were taking a class on *Death and Dying*. This particular class dealt with the loss of a child. Before the class met, the professor shared with us the reading material that she had assigned to the class in preparation for this presentation. One of the assigned articles, by Ruth Davies, piqued my interest, because it compared traditional models of grief with new models of grief. The traditional models place emphasis on bereaved people letting go of their emotional relationships with those who have died; in contrast, the new models place emphasis on holding onto one's emotional relationship with those who have died.

Early on in my grief journey, I underwent weekly counseling sessions. I distinctly remember my counselor telling me that, "Grief is a process of letting go." It took every ounce of control for me to not scoff at that remark. In my opinion, she had no clue what she was saying if she thought that I could ever let go of my son. In time, however, I began to realize that, even if my son had lived, I probably did not have as much control over his life and his future as I once believed. My hopes and dreams for him may never have been realized, even had he lived. So, little by little, I was able to let go of his future.

Letting go of my hopes and dreams for my son's future does not mean that I "let go" of my son or ended my emotional relationship with him. I think about him every day and I "talk" to him on a regular basis. I still miss him and wonder how he might have turned out had he lived. However, it was when I understood and accepted that my grief over the loss of my son would always be with me on some level that I was able to really start living again. Holding onto an emotional relationship with our children who have died may seem irrational to those who have never experienced such a loss, but for those of us who have lived through the death of a child, holding onto an emotional relationship with that child is normal. It does not mean we are stuck in our grief. It may, in fact, be instrumental in bringing us comfort and peace.

As we begin a new year, may you find the support and understanding you need to help you through this journey. May you ultimately find comfort and peace.

Carmen

*Let the joy of your loved one's LIFE
seep up through the layers of hurt
to emerge into a single moment of light.
~ Darcie Sims*

Chapter Sharing Pages

New Year's Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

I RESOLVE:

- That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving and I will not let others put a timetable on my grief.
- That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.
- That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I won't hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave" or "getting better" or "healing by now".
- That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.
- That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child can't possibly know how it feels.
- That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process and it will pass.
- That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.
- That I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and I won't feel compelled to explain or justify this communion with others.
- That I will try to eat, sleep and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief.
- To know that I am not losing my mind and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings or disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.
- To let myself heal and not to feel guilty about feeling better.
- To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous that is, I will make steady upward progress and, when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods too, will pass.
- To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that, at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so that eventually they will become a habit.
- That I will reach out at times and try to help someone knowing that helping others will help me get over my depression
- That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would have wanted for me.

Nancy A Mower
TCF Honolulu, HI

New Year

The New Year comes when all the world is ready
For changes, resolutions – great beginnings.

For us, to whom that stroke of midnight means
A missing child remembered,
For us the new year comes
More like another darkness.

But let us not forget that this may be the year
When love and hope and courage
Find each other somewhere in the darkness
To lift their voice and speak:
Let there be Light.

"The Sorrow and the Light"
by *Sascha*

Chapter Sharing Pages

Approach Your Grief by Way of Your Strength: A Writing for Men Who Grieve.

by Jim Miller and Tom Golden

No one has ever suffered the very same loss you have. If someone else's partner or child or parent has died, just as yours has, that loss is not the same as yours. Even if two of you are mourning the death of the same family member, you each have had your own history and relationship with that person, your own memories to recall and your own issues to work through. Similarly, no one else's divorce or job loss or physical disability could ever be mistaken for yours.

Just as your loss is original, *you* are original too. No one has ever had your same experiences, your same make-up, your same hopes and dreams. Nor has anyone ever had your exact assortment of strengths and abilities. Those unique traits of yours can give you an edge in facing what lies before you. In a time that seems uncertain, you will do well to fall back upon what you know with certainty. Your strengths have served you well before. Let them serve you well now by helping you consciously connect with your pain a piece at a time as you slowly whittle away at your grief.

Do you like being active? Then move around, use your body, tackle a project, help out others. One man found a path to grieve his brother's suicide by training hard for a tennis tournament each of them had wanted to win. Every time he practiced, he was with both his brother and his pain. He found a way to connect his action with his grief and, yes, after three years of staying at it, he won the tournament.

Are you good with your mind? Then use it. Think your way through what's happening, what you want to do. Come up with goals that are clear and plans that are workable. One man who lost his job through corporate downsizing started by reading all he could about how to deal with major life transitions. Then he enrolled in a course on the

subject. Next thing he knew, he was helping others with his knowledge. Today that's become his business.

Are you a people person? Then place yourself among those with whom you can talk and listen, and find ways you can share in other ways too. A man whose wife died after forty years of marriage became a volunteer in the hospital where she had been cared for. Another man chose to visit new patients in a rehabilitation center after he became a paraplegic in an auto accident. Each was using his activity to connect with and work through his grief.

Are you best at doing things with your hands? Then do *more* things with your hands and use that experience to reflect upon what has happened to you. A widower who was a woodworker used his skills to create blocks and toys for the nursery school where his wife had taught. Each time he gave his creations away, he explained why he had chosen to do what he did. And each time he tapped into his grief a little more.

Are you a quiet one? Then write rather than talk if that feels right. Or take slow walks. Or listen to soothing music. Or just sit in silence and reflect. Are you expressive emotionally? Then cry or laugh, rant or rave, show your astonishment or display your love. Are you precise by nature? Then try keeping track of your grief with a daily record of what is happening inside, including the progress you make. Are you impulsive? Then improvise as you go along. Down-to-earth? Then do what seems most practical.

In the various ways that seem right for you, call upon your God-given strengths to lead you into and through your time of grief. Tap into your pain by using those skills that seem most natural to you. Remember that each time you do that, you move yourself that much closer to your healing.

*This writing is a small excerpt from **When a Man Faces Grief: 12 Practical Ideas to Help You Heal from Loss** by James E. Miller and Thomas R. Golden.*

Chapter Sharing Pages



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
Reading	Stacey Smith, son 23, suicide	781-944-5841

Playing with Three Strings

We have seen Yitzhak Perlman who walks the stage with braces on both legs, on two crutches. He takes his seat, unhinges the clasps of his legs, Tucking one leg back extending the other, laying down his crutches, placing the violin under his chin.

On one occasion one of his violin strings broke. The audience grew silent but the violinist did not leave the stage. He signaled the maestro, and the orchestra began its part. The violinist played with power and intensity on only three strings.

With three strings, he modulated, changed and recomposed the piece in his head. He retuned the strings to get different sounds, turned them upward and downward. The audience screamed with delight, applauded their appreciation.

Asked later how he had accomplished this feat, The violinist answered, "It is my task to make music with what remains."
A legacy mightier than a concert.

Make music with what remains.
Complete the song left for us to sing.
Transcend the loss.
Play it out with heart, soul and might,
with all remaining strength within us.

Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis

IN THE SILENCE

In the silence you hear me,
In the silence I am here.
In the silence you can feel me,
In the silence it is clear.....
That my spirit hasn't left you,
I am just a thought away,
You can see me in the shadows,
Anytime you look my way.
Look for me in the sunshine,
And in the stars at night.
In the wind, trees and flowers,
Everything that is in sight.
Talk to me, say my name,
Know that I'm still here,
In my death I have a new life,
And one day it will be clear.
So talk to me and look for me
In everything you do,
For I haven't gone so far away,
I'm really right next to you

~reprinted from Bridgewater, NJ TCF May 2006
Newsletter

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



In Loving Memory of Joel Lindquist. It's been eight years and we miss you as much as ever. You're always with us. Love, Mom, Dad and Andrew.

In Loving Memory of Mark Avery Lee, our son and brother. Love, Mom & Christopher

In Loving Memory of Courtney Marie Corning. We love & miss you sweetheart. We are lost without you. I pray that your spirit will help us through this. God bless! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. Love, Mom, Dad, & all the kids. Xoxo

In Loving Memory of Erik Sean Rakos. You are always near and dear to my heart. I love you, MaMa

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 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 – DECEMBER 2009

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

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.