



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

June 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.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 6/7/10 **Sharing Precious Memories**
Mariann & Reenie
- 7/6/10 **NOTE TUESDAY NITE DUE TO HOLIDAY**
Missed Milestones
Eileen & Mariann
- Chapter Co-Leader: Carmen Pope 978-750-4043
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*This month's website is sponsored
in memory of:*

Todd M. MacDonald

You always said you were born
500 years too soon.
Our lives are empty now;
we are lost without your Tech Support;
we miss your funny rants and laughter;
the world's a smaller place without you.

Missing you every day, Mom, Dad, & Tracy

-and-

Roger Costa

In loving memory of our son and brother, Roger.
Twenty years have passed since
we held you in our arms.
The future we looked forward to as a family
was taken away, but we are grateful for the
wonderful memories of the years we had together.
We love and miss you, Roger.

Love, Mom, Dad and Matt."

Remembering Our Children



June Birthdays

Lt. Stephen E. Gil
son of Eileen & Larry Gil

Eric Kronk
son of Kathy and Walter Kronk

Joseph Matthew Liguori
son of Marie Liguori

Michael Edward Lindberg Jr
son of Sylvia & Michael Lindberg

John Joseph Nelson
son of Gladys & Robert Nelson

Jeannie O'Hare
daughter of Jean and Tom O'Hare

Jason Peary
son of David and Donna Peary

Christopher John Pope
son of Carmen and Jeff Pope

Ricky Burnham
son of Tia and Terry Tessimond

Donald Tottingham
son of Mal and Bobbie Tottingham



June Angel Dates

Andrew Adams Wilder
son of Mark and Betty Wilder

Benjamin Thomas Huxtable
grandson of Alaina & Peter Huxtable

Bobby Moore
son of Jeff Moore

Christopher John Pope
son of Carmen and Jeff Pope

Debbie Sevier
daughter of Fred and Trudy Sevier

Harold E. Williamson
son of Sandra Williamson

Jason Peary
son of David and Donna Peary

Katie Emma Flett
daughter of Kathleen Flett

Megan Lee Power
daughter of Margaret Power

Ricky Burnham
son of Tia and Terry Tessimond

Todd McDonald
son of John and Janet McDonald

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

From the Chapter Leader

After a few earlier rain showers, we had a beautiful evening for the balloon release. About 50 balloons took off together and disappeared in no time, all headed out of sight in the same direction on a gust of wind. They cleared the nearby trees, carrying our messages to our loved ones. I tried to follow Joel's purple balloon as long as I could.

As Cindi counted to three, I found myself holding on a little more tightly to the string, in anticipation of having to let Joel's balloon go. Later, I remembered a poem I had written several years ago called "Balloons and Letting Go" in which I tried to capture the feeling of holding on to my child, even though he was gone. We all demonstrated some of that courage as we released our balloons and let them fly free. I'd like to share the poem I read before the balloon release.

Wings of Flight by Sharon Kortas

When all was quiet
And we were sad
Thinking of the
Times we'd had

A butterfly
Then came to us
Flew around
Without a rush

Showed us how
He'd been set free
Drifting off
Where we can't see

Helped us know
He's on his way
We'll treasure this
Each passing day.

Thank you for the warm reception I received when Carmen announced my appointment as her Co-Leader for the NorthShore Boston Chapter. It is a great honor to serve all of you, and I look forward to working with Carmen and everyone who participates each month. Thank you for your confidence in me! We attended the regional meeting on May 1, 2010 that was held by Rick Mirabile in Milford, MA. It was good to meet with other Chapter leaders and see how we are part of the larger TCF community. I truly felt that I was among friends during our Chapter's pot luck supper. I'm glad we're taking this journey together - it's much better than doing it alone.

At the June meeting, we will be sharing precious memories of our children. Please bring a picture or other memento to share with everyone.

Mariann

Chapter Sharing Pages

Balloons and Letting Go

I'm afraid to let go;
afraid that you will float away
like a balloon,
and I will forget your true color.

So I clutch the string,
forgetting that the balloon
is already broken,
and you have escaped into thin air.

Andrew let the yellow and green balloons go
on his seventh birthday,
removed them from the light post,
bright party sentinels,
letting them float up.

They caught on the topmost branches
of the same tall pine tree
that you climbed on your eight birthday,
not so very long ago.
They went even higher,
and stayed there for several days.

I saw in them a sign from you,
telling us that you have not floated
so far away that we cannot see you,
if we look.

Mariann Lindquist, TCF NorthShore Boston
Chapter
Remembering Joel

Graduation Time

It's June and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance". Now there is a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you are strange?

As always you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to and don't hide your tears. It's quite all right to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember: That your instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think.

It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way - and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.

Peggy Gibson,
TCF Nashville, TN

*The passage of time alone does not
cause our grief to end, but its softening
touch helps us to survive ~*

Wayne Loder

Chapter Sharing Pages

GRADUATION-A TIME TO REMEMBER

I was driving down the road the other day, thinking of how the retail market makes any event an opportunity for revenue. Graduation seems to fall into that category, with cards and gifts for every Graduate. This time of year reminds me that my graduation from high school was a bittersweet time.

Really, it was the first time I had "surpassed" my older brother, David, in anything significant. I turned the age that he was when he died, 18, in the beginning of my senior year of high school. That year was difficult for me, as I felt that I was getting to move past where he had been cut short. Graduation day was no exception. I was happy to be getting out of high school, and looking forward to that coming August when I would go to college. But why was I getting to do these things, and not David? What made me so special that I got to stay here and experience these things? I still am not quite sure of the answer to those questions.

Graduation from high school was really just the first of many events which I have gotten to experience that David never will. College graduation, my wedding, and the birth of my two children are examples. And for me, each event has been a bit bittersweet.

The good news is this: that while time does make it easier to bear day-to-day activities without your sibling, each major event in your life presents itself as a new opportunity to remember your brother or sister, as well. For me, figuring that out was a huge relief, as it meant that my fear of forgetting David was not something I needed to worry about any more. His memory is just as alive for me today, 15-1/2 years later, as it was when I took that walk across the stage to accept my high school diploma.

Amy Baker Ferry
Heart of Florida TCF, Longwood, FL
June 2004

TCF Walk to Remember Join our "Virtual" Team

TCF No Shore - Boston will once again participate in the "**virtual**" Walk to Remember. The Walk to Remember is an event that takes place at the National Conference each year. For those of us who can't attend in person this is a way to participate and raise funds for the Chapter. As you know, we are a non-profit and we depend on donations to cover the administrative costs of our chapter. We have created a team page where you may make a general donation to the team, or join as a team member and create your own page where your friends and family can join you by making donations to your personal page.

Please go to the following web page to get started:

<http://tcfwalktoremember.org>

Click on Team Rank on the right side of the page and **select "more"** to find TCF No Shore-Boston and **click on the team**.

On the next page you may either make a **general donation** to the team by clicking on the box at the top of the page, or you may "**join our team**" and create your own web page.

If you choose to become a member of the team you may then create your own web page which can be sent to family and friends to enlist them in our fundraising campaign.

Thank you for considering this method of donating to help TCF National and **our own chapter**. We rely on this type of fundraising to help us with things like buying additional books for the library, the newsletter mailing, the Pot Luck Supper and Balloon Release and the Annual Candlelighting Ceremony.

The Steering Committee

Chapter Sharing Pages

Father's Day

I just finished watching another miserable cologne commercial on TV. For some reason these are the first signs of the upcoming holiday, commercials that are only shown at Christmas and Father's Day to give wives and kids some idea of what to get Dad to celebrate a gift-oriented holiday. Like the other fathers who read this newsletter, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day, just as I know there is no way that it will happen. My son's life. An opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are the age my son should be now. A chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called and wished my father a happy day the night before, and go to the florist for the flowers I will place on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry for a time, then return home to my wife and our infant son. This year will have a greater measure of peace due to young Dan's arrival, but I shall always have that Alex-sized hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I too die.

Like many bereaved fathers I have felt the lack of understanding of the non-bereaved on how a father should mourn his child's death, and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such belief in the strength of maternal love, and do such a good job of ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at Alex's memorial service was on how my wife was dealing with this tragedy, to the long-time friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark Card commercial last year, the majority of people around us seem to have difficulty with the thought that a father may need to grieve for his deceased child just as much as a mother might.

So that is where some support and love is needed, and needed badly. Of course we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. In a recent newsletter there was a note from a bereaved mother from New Jersey asking fathers and siblings to be understanding of a grieving mother's needs on Mother's Day. I agree, but I would also hope that you ladies will not forget your husbands this Father's Day as well. It is frequently said that we males don't often talk of our emotional needs, and are reluctant to show our pain, but we need love and 'warm fuzzies' when we hurt also. Please remember us on June 18, and please remember also that those cute little sentimental commercials that hurt you in May, take their toll on us in June. There are definitely times when I can do without Old Spice, McDonalds, Hallmark, and AT&T.

Brothers, I wish you peace, comfort, and love.

Doug Hughes
TCF ~ Cincinnati, Ohio

Chapter Sharing Pages

DO REAL MEN ATTEND TCF MEETINGS?

It has often bothered me that more men and persons of cultural minorities don't attend TCF meetings. I know there are societal and cultural restraints which inhibit many bereaved persons from seeking outside help or support. Being both a man and a member of an ethnic group, I know very well the false pride which often restrains us from admitting we are not as self-sufficient as we want others to believe. We are taught (men in particular) at a young age not to reveal when we are hurt. We must be strong and brave and silent.

Stoic endurance is really not unique in any culture. The British call it "keeping a stiff upper lip." The Japanese call it *gaman*. Hispanics pride themselves on their ability to *aguantar*. In the U.S. it is embodied in the Puritan ethic.

When I began attending TCF meetings regularly, I wondered for a long time whether I was a "real man." Was I less macho than my peers? Couldn't I handle my grief in solitary dignity? The answers, I finally decided, were yes, no, and maybe. Maybe I could have adjusted to my son's death all by myself. Maybe I could have shunned the possibilities of self-destructive behavior, drunkenness, drug abuse, wild living, or the unraveling of my family life without TCF. Maybe I could have dealt alone with all the anger, despair, and depression. Fortunately I didn't have to.

I readily admit I wasn't very enthusiastic about going to my first TCF meeting. I imagined a group of people sitting around crying on each other's shoulders, bemoaning their cruel fate. Instead, I found people who were hurting as much as I; who, like me, were angry, who also often felt depressed—but who were working very hard to mend the tattered fabric of their lives! I soon discovered that this was a place where I could talk about my grief and still feel safe about it. Nobody was going to think me less of a man for not getting over my son's death in a few months.

TCF doesn't promise or offer any quick fixes. There are no magic words or formulas to take away your grief. Whatever "magic" takes place, I know now, happens slowly. I don't believe it is possible for a bereaved parent to "forget," but I think TCF's support and understanding help make it easier for us to go on with our lives. We need not become lifelong emotional cripples.

To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try. Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the "magic" doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have. TCF is for any and all bereaved parents—men and women, minorities and gringos, people of any or no religious faith. The one thing everyone at TCF has in common is the death of a child—and how it feels.

Steve Perez
TCF, Denver, CO

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

A Father's View of The Compassionate Friends: Courage, Surprise, An Understanding

Attendance Requirement: Courage.

I don't think I am unique. I did not want to attend a meeting of Compassionate Friends.

I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made a devil's deal; he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor—his debt some weeks away. The thought of discussing death nauseates me. We, my son and I, had made a bad deal.

The Meeting: A Surprise.

I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition.

My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

The Result: An Understanding.

Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick easy cures.

Grief is a catharsis. Most of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But, there are

nuggets—small ideas you will want to try or things you will want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure.

Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people at the meetings do understand. And they try to help.

My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet, he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

What's in it for you? Compassionate Friends is here to help—to listen, to suggest, to understand. If you handle your grief well, you do not need Compassionate Friends. But we need you. Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please share it.



LOVE NOTES



In Loving Memory of Eric Smith. It's been four years and our love continues. We think of you always and miss you every day. Love Mom, Dad, Rachel & Aaron.

In Loving Memory of Jimmy Corliss. I think of you so often and wish you were here to love and enjoy. Love, Mom

In Loving Memory of our son Don on Birthday, June 30th. Love, Mom & dad

In Loving Memory Jeannie my daughter & our sister. On your 38th birthday we remember your kind heart and miss you – always with Love.

In Loving Memory of Erick W. Dill. One year has passed, and we all miss you. Love you our shining star and buddy boy, my son, my brother. Love, Mom, Dad & Deandra xoxo

In Loving Memory of Eric Kronk. We love you and miss you. Mom & Dad

In Loving Memory of Harold E. Williamson, Jr. To my son, I truly miss you very much every day and especially this one month that I think of you more during the month that you left us. Not only the month you left us, but you are not here to celebrate Father's Day with your two daughters. With Much Love from your Mom.

In Loving Memory of our daughter Patricia "Patty" Kingston. You are always in our hearts. Love, Mom & Dad

In Loving Memory of Andrew Wilder. You are always in our hearts & thoughts. We'll be missing you forever. Love, Mom, Dad & Doug

In Loving Memory of Christopher. It's hard to believe that this would be your 16th birthday. You were with us for such a short time, but taught us so much. We send our love. Love, Mom, Dad, Kelly & Dave.

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 – JUNE 2010



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.