



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

March 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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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS

3/1/10 **Anger / Guilt / Forgiveness**
Scott & Marnie

4/1/10 **Two Groups Men/Wome**
Reggie & Jeff/ Pat & Cindi

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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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:*

Traci Ann Warren

It's been 5 years and we all miss you so much.
Love, Mom & Eric

-and-

Christopher Wooster

On your birthday, March 10th
Death ends a life, but it does not end a relationship,
which struggles on in the survivor's mind towards
some resolution. We miss you and love you forever!
You are always in our hearts. xxoo
Love mom and the gang!

Remembering Our Children



March Birthdays

Rachel Taylor Barberian
daughter of Frank and Lynne Barberian

Lino J Brosco
son of Leno and Emilia Brosco

Aaron Daniel Carey
son of Jim & Rachel Carey

Daniel P Goggin
son of Susan & Maurice Goggin

Jackson Kane
son of Jina Kane

Aram Karakashian
son of Pat and Garo Karakasian

Patricia Gail Kingston
daughter of Elaine and John Kingston

Kaleigh Lambert
granddaughter of Irene Lambert

Ricardo Melo
son of David & Theresa Mel

Amanda Louise Nadeau
daughter of Julia Rodriquez & Louis Nadeau

Henry Robert Thompson
son of Margaret & Henry Thompson

Christopher Walker
son of Bridget & Joseph Walker

Ronald Richard Wetmore
son of Lori Kearin and Ron Wetmore

Brian T Wilson
son of Linda Wilson

Christopher James Wooster
son of Debbie Linnehan



March Angel Dates

Rachel Taylor Barberian
daughter of Frank and Lynne Barberian

Anthony Ralph Cota Jr
son of Anthony and Maria Cota

Frankie D'Ippolito
son of Frank & Cynthia D'Ippolito

Andrew Geljookian
son of Nancy & John Geljookian

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

Tiffany Marie Hines
daughter of Jeff and Debbie Hines

Heather Johnson
daughter of Susan Barry & Dennis Johnson

Mark Michael McDonough, Jr.
son of Millie Bowman

Glenn James McCloy
son of June and Jim McCloy

Michael Joseph McNeil
son of Mike & MaryJo McNeil

Amanda Louise Nadeau
daughter of Julia Rodriquez & Louis Nadeau

Jack Rowland
son of Marty & Ellie Rowland

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

When I listen to the newly bereaved (meaning those who are in the first few years of their grief journey) share their experiences and their feelings at our monthly meetings, I am reminded of what my life was like twelve years ago. I remember how desperate I felt, incapable of imagining that my life would ever be worth living again, wishing that there was a way to end my pain. I remember the dramatic void in our everyday life. I remember how I feared to face the depths of my feelings, thinking that I would be totally engulfed by them and overwhelmed to the point of no return. I remember the exhaustion, both physical and mental, and the guilt over having to take care of myself so that I could survive. I remember the numbness and the robotic way in which I tried to carry out my daily responsibilities. I remember how long it took for me to understand the reality of my son's death; I knew intellectually that he had died, but the rest of my being wanted to deny that this was true and final. I remember reaching out for help, knowing that I could not cope with this burden unsupported. I also remember how frustrated I felt when the unexpected setbacks would strike, at times when I thought the burden was finally lightening and I was making some progress.

When I listen to the more seasoned members of our group, I am filled with hope. They, too, were as desperate as I was in the beginning, doubting that their lives could go on. Now, we reach out to the newly bereaved to assure them that their feelings are normal and to encourage them to keep taking care of themselves and to keep expressing their feelings as they progress through this monumental challenge. Somehow, our more seasoned members have persevered, one step at a time, even though moving forward seemed impossible at the onset of this journey. By trial and error, we all learned how to cope with our grief and how to hold our children in our hearts. We learned that grief doesn't disappear, but it does soften, enabling us to reinvest in our lives and to find peace. We learned that we are not alone.

I encourage all of you to keep attending our meetings. Over time, I trust that you, too, will recognize the benefit of participating in a group that truly understands.

Carmen

You Don't Have to be Perfect

We need to give ourselves permission to be human, to try and to stumble, to be momentarily weak and feel shame but to overcome shame with moments of strength, courage and generosity. We need to learn to define ourselves not by our worst moments but by our more typical ones. Life is not a spelling bee where one mistake wipes out all the things we have done right. Life is not a test for which the passing grade is 100 percent and anything less is a failure. Maybe, when it comes to building bridges and space capsules, one mistake renders the entire project worthless. But life is so much more complicated than building bridges or space capsules that we can't expect ourselves or anyone else to do it error-free.

Life is like the baseball season, where even the best team loses at least a third of its games and even the worst team has its days of brilliance. The goal is not to win every game but to win more than you lose, and if you do that often enough, in the end you may find you have won it all.

Harold Kushner

from: "You Don't Have to Be Perfect to be Loved"

based on his book How Good Do We Have to Be? Little, Brown

Chapter Sharing Pages

Everything is the Way It's Supposed to Be

At many Chapter meetings, a common thread of discussion is how difficult it is to cope with the changes in our lives. Since the death of our loved one, everything seems to have been "turned upside down." The old normal is gone, and every aspect of our lives has been affected - relationships, work, home, health and peace of mind. For a long time, when someone asked me how I was doing I would sadly say, "I'm waiting for my life to return to normal, the way it was before Joel died." I knew of course, that this was wishful thinking, and that I was in the unenviable position of having to find a new normal, something that would work for me and my family.

A phrase that has helped me recently (and it has taken years to come to this level of acceptance) is, "Everything is the way it's supposed to be." When say these words to myself, I am reminded that although I can't change what has happened, I can accept my present circumstances and find some reasons to be grateful.

This "reminder" to myself allows me to focus on what I still have, and I find there is still much for which to be thankful. I have a loving husband and son, who is growing up to be a fine young man. There are many wonderful memories of Joel that continue to play a part in our lives. My husband and I have a deeper, more nurturing relationship for having working through the stresses and emotions that come with losing a child. Our relationships with others have also changed and become more clear over time. New friendships are developing, that might not have been as important if our lives had not been thrown out of balance.

Many self-help books use similar phrases. For example, "remember to be here now" suggests that we bring our thoughts back to the present moment, and stop worrying about the past or the future. This may seem abstract when our "now" encompasses a life that is empty without our child. The now is just too painful, especially when our grief is still fresh. The past provides both comforting memories and anguished reminders, and the future may look quite bleak as we envision living without our child.

The phrase "everything happens for a reason" also reminds us to be at peace with our present circumstances. These words may be difficult to accept when the death of a child is involved, because it brings up negative thoughts such as, what is the reason why my child died? We didn't deserve

to lose him or her, so where is the reason in that?

However, when I remember that everything is the way it's supposed to be, I find a certain measure of peace. I am able to look at my present situation and begin to find some pleasure in it. While I continue to experience sadness and look to others for love and support, I also find comfort in the things that are a part of my life.

Everyone needs a safe place, both physically and mentally. In the midst of grief, we have an even greater need for a refuge to which we can retreat when outside demands become too much to handle. It is helpful to take a look at what gives us this sense of security .

Even though everything is the way it's supposed to be, it doesn't mean that everything is wonderful. We will still have health problems, arguments over petty things, disagreements with friends, and aggravation over having too much to do. We will still have that pain in our hearts that we are gradually learning to live with.

Eventually, we may be able to find that peaceful place and learn to love ourselves again. Such a feeling of love helps us to stay connected with our child who has died, as well as with others in our lives who share this special love with us. We are able to tap into all the wonderful memories we have, and remember our child in Spirit. In time, we may be able to offer opportunities for healing to those who need it. This, in itself, is a wonderful gift, a legacy from our child. It is the proverbial "silver lining" to all that we have experienced as a result of our loss. Once we accept our present circumstances and can be thankful for what remains, we find ourselves able to live and love again. We can allow ourselves to be carried along the river of our life, and find joy in the experience.

May you find that joy and fulfillment, while remembering the child who is with you still.

Mariann Lindquist
TCF NorthShore-Boston Chapter

"In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on." Robert Frost

Chapter Sharing Pages

What Do We Need During Grief?

TIME - time alone and time with others whom you trust and who will listen when you need to talk. Months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings that go along with loss.

REST - RELAXATION - EXERCISE - NOURISHMENT - DIVERSION - You may need extra amounts of things you needed before. Jogging, short naps, a trip, a "cause" to work for to help others - any of these may give you a lift. Grief is an exhausting process emotionally. You need to replenish yourself. Follow what feels healing to you and what connect you to the people and things you love.

SECURITY - Try to reduce or find help for the stresses in your life. Allow yourself to be close to those you trust. Getting back into routines helps.

HOPE - You may find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them and realizing that they have recovered and that time does help may give you hope that sometime in the future your grief will be less raw and painful.

CARING -Try to allow yourself to accept the expressions of caring from others even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering the same loss may bring a feeling of closeness with that person.

GOALS - For a while, it will seem that much of life is without meaning. At times like these, small goals are helpful. Something to look forward to, like having lunch today with a friend or planning a movie for tomorrow night helps you get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is a rule of thumb. As time passes you may need to work on some longer range goals to give some structure and direction to your life. You may need guidance or counseling to help with this.

SMALL PLEASURES - Don't underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures as you are ready for them. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food - all are small steps toward regaining your pleasure in life itself.

PERMISSION TO BACKSLIDE - Sometimes after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves back in the old feeling of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because, as humans we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death all at once. So we let it in a little at a time.

DRUGS ARE NOT ALWAYS HELPFUL - Even medication used to help people get through periods of shock, under a physician's guidance, may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. We cannot prevent or cure grief. The only way OUT is THROUGH.

Compiled by Judith Herr, M.S.W. for Hilltop Hospice, Grand Junction 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

The Newsletter – Online?

Chapter Library Reminder

It's nice to see that so many of you are making use of our Chapter library, which has quite a few new books. This is just a reminder to return them when you're done so that others can read them, as well. Quite a few of the books were donated in memory of loved ones, and we want to make sure they continue to be a part of our Chapter resources.

We will be doing an annual inventory within the next few months, and will contact those of you with "overdue" books. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you can mail the books to TCF NorthShore Boston Chapter c/o Aldersgate Methodist Church (the address is inside the book cover).

Also, if anyone has any comments about books or authors you have found particularly helpful, or suggestions for new titles or subjects we may wish to add in the future, please let us know by contacting me either directly or via the newsletter.

Thanks!

Mariann Lindquist

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. 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.

Send to: **TCF No.Shore-Boston**

PO BOX 1117

Billerica, MA 01821-0961

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



*In Loving Memory of our daughter Patricia "Patty" Kingston. Thinking of you on Valentine's Day 2010.
Love, Mom & Dad*

In Loving Memory of our daughter "Patty". Thinking of you and wish you a Happy Birthday. Love, Mom & Dad.

In Loving Memory of Traci. It has been 5 years, and I miss your smile. Love Mom and Eric

In Loving Memory of Rachel Taylor Barberian. Sending you our love and prayers on your 10th birthday/anniversary. We miss you so much! We love you to the moon and back! Love, Mom, Dad, Daniel and Sarah.

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 – MARCH 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

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.