



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

March 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 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.
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Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
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PH: 630-990-0010
FAX: 630-990-0246
www.thecompassionatefriends.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 3/7/11 **Dealing With Others Expectations**
Steve, David, Carmen
- 4/4/11 **2 Groups – Men/Women**
Jeff & Reggie, Cindi & Penny

SNOW POLICY For Regular Meetings:

If there is **no school** posted for North Reading the TCF meeting will be cancelled

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*This month's website is sponsored
in memory of:*

Christopher John Sardella

To our little angel,
We miss you more than
words can ever express.
You gave us the most wonderful
two years anyone can ever ask for.
We think of you every day and
we'll love you forever and always.

XOXO
Dad, Mom & family

Chapter Sharing Pages



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 Karakashian

Ronald Richard Wetmore
son of Lori Kearin Wetmore

Patricia Gail Kingston
daughter of Elaine and John Kingston

Kaleigh Lambert
granddaughter of Irene Lambert

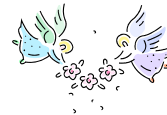
Christopher James Wooster
son of Debbie Linnehan

Ricardo Melo
son of David & Theresa Melo

Amanda Louise Nadeau
daughter of Julia Rodriquez & Louis Nadeau

Christopher Walker
son of Bridget & Joseph Walker

Brian T Wilson
son of Linda Wilson



March Angel Dates

Rachel Taylor Barberian
daughter of Frank and Lynne Barberian

Heather Johnson
daughter of Susan Barry & Dennis Johnson

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

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

Jamison John Riggio
grandson of Francesca Riggio

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 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

Several of my e-mail contacts occasionally send me “chain” e-mails, with which most of us are quite familiar. Some of them are humorous; others are promoted as “magical”; a few are actually inspirational. I must confess that I usually break the chain when I receive these e-mails. I take the time to read most of them, but I rarely forward them. This past week, I received one that had been written by Regina Brett, of the *Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, Ohio. It contained the 45 lessons that life taught her, and she claims that it was the most requested column she had ever written. As I read and contemplated her life lessons, I realized that some of her words of wisdom involve attitudinal choices which can be useful throughout the grief process. I decided to share some of the ones that resonated with me.

- Life isn't fair, but it's still good.*
- When in doubt, just take the next small step.*
- Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.*
- You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.*
- Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.*
- It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.*
- Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.*
- It's OK to let your children see you cry.*
- Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.*
- Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.*
- Always choose life.*
- Forgive everyone everything.*
- What other people think of you is none of your business.*
- Time heals almost everything. Give time time.*
- However good or bad a situation is, it will change.*
- Believe in miracles.*
- Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.*
- All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.*
- Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.*
- If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.*
- Yield.*
- Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift."*

If I had read these words thirteen years ago, months after my son died, I would have had a great deal of difficulty agreeing with the author's point of view. How could life ever be good again? But a great deal has happened in the past thirteen years. I somehow survived the worst part of my grief journey; I learned how to cope with the remnants of my grief; I chose to re-invest in life. Because of my experience with grief, I realize the truth in Regina Brett's words. For those who are newly bereaved, continue to take the next small steps. In time, you will heal and realize that life is still a gift.

Carmen

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“It has been said that time heals all wounds. I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time the mind, protecting it's sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens, but it's never gone.” ~ Rose Kennedy

Chapter Sharing Pages

Cozy Memories

By Elaine E. Stillwell, M.A., M.S., Rockville Centre, NY

How we all agonize about what to do with our loved one's clothing after he/she has died! We all seem to have different ways of handling the situation. And guess what? No one way is the perfect solution for everybody. We all grieve differently, and we all approach the difficult tasks of mourning in our own personal way. No one should tell us what to do. We have to do what our heart says, and each heart speaks its own message. I know this too well after losing my two oldest children, twenty-one-year-old Denis and nineteen-year-old Peggy, in the same car accident.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of having dinner with a group of dear friends. Having met at a local support group after each of us losing a child, we could all laugh together, and we could all cry together. Our bonding was strong. We understood the tremendous void in each of our families.

The highlight of the evening was marked by our host appearing in the middle of the living room carrying a quilt in his arms. Holding it up for us all to see, we were overcome with envy. From the clothing he had saved when his twenty-two year- old son had died seven years before, Jerry had made a Love Quilt. He had cut thirty twelve-inch squares, (10" X 10" when finished), from favorite garments to tell the story of Matthew's life.

Each ten-inch square shared a precious memory with us. We all sat there, dumbstruck, wondering why we, too, hadn't thought of this wonderful idea. Although we had all saved clothing mementos of our children, none of us had the assortment of clothes to work with that Jerry had. How we yearned to have the kind of memories Jerry had saved! And the funny thing was that Jerry had never planned this. The idea had taken root years after Matthew had died and luckily Jerry had the precious materials.

Jerry began with Matthew's old bedspread, used as a backing- a simple, boyish, bright-red quilted-type cotton cover. The he cut twelve-inch square patches from each of the garments, lining each piece with a plain cotton fabric. Arranging them in five patches across, and six patches down, he used a sewing machine to create the quilting stitches across each piece and then trimmed the white quilt with a red, white and blue binding all around.

There were pieces from Matthew's favorite phys-ed tee shirts from school days emblazoned with school names, his cub scout shirt and the badges he earned, his pajama top buttoned down the middle with its sleeves folded neatly, potholders from his frog collection, his cowboy pants complete with fringe-reminders of his third birthday party, his precious DeMolay shirt proudly proclaiming hours of volunteer service work, his well-worn college and sports shirts he had worn while shouting for his teams, and his favorite jeans with stories

of their own.

All the quilt pieces echoed Matthew's life story. But the crowning glory of the quilt was Matthew's chef's hat and shirt! How proud he was to be called chef at the Plaza Hotel in New York City, and how proud his dad was to include those patches in this handmade quilt. He even fashioned the four corners of the quilt using Matthew's chef's clothing and the toggles from the jacket. Do you see what love can do to remember? Don't be afraid to try new ideas. Jerry never sewed a stitch in his life and look what he accomplished. We are all still green with envy. And even though we never met Matthew Good, son of Elaine and Jerry Good, (January 21, 1967 - August 15, 1989), we feel we know him, thanks to the Love Quilt and a father's love.

Other grieving folks have the same desire to find a way to use some of the favorite clothes of their loved one as a way of connecting with them. They want to savor the memories associated with the clothing. They want to feel close to their loved one by wrapping themselves in the favorite clothes that evoke those memories. They want to be linked with their loved one, and using the clothes they wore seems to be a perfect answer to that need.

Many bereaved who have no skills with a needle and thread or sewing machine have been able to locate quilting groups in their locale or even miles away across the country that invite families to contact them, tell them about their loved one, and send favorite clothing for these volunteers to make a memory quilt. Many hours are spent via phone calls and e-mail messages filling in the life story of the special person to be remembered.

Enduring friendships have been made between these bereaved families and the quilters, as they spend months sharing memories to guide the design of the quilt. It is truly a labor of love. Members have dazzled our Compassionate Friends Chapter with the breathtaking quilts that have been lovingly created by this process. Favorite music, hobbies, sports, foods, and pictures echo from the fabric of the quilt. You simply feel the presence of the person being remembered in such a heartfelt way.

Families find displaying or using the finished quilt in their living room or family room is a welcoming way to invite comments and stories of their loved one. People can't help but remark about favorite clothing pieces they recognize or fill in with a particular story attached to something highlighted in the quilt. Grown-ups and children alike love to wrap themselves up in the coziness and warmth of the quilt. It just feels so good and makes them feel so close to their loved ones. They discover you can hug it, you can cry in it, you can slumber in it. You can just feel the serenity in it as you soak up all the memories as you bask in the spiritual presence of your loved one.

Chapter Sharing Pages

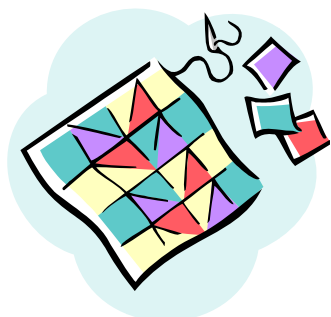
Some of us who have only a few articles of clothing left from our loved one (not the rich array that Jerry had), have discovered a unique way to create a Memory Quilt for ourselves. We can use any material or combination of materials we choose, maybe a fabric which shouts a favorite color, a hobby like football, ballet, fishing or music, a subject like computers, books, cooking- whatever it is that talks to our heart about our loved one who died.

After cutting out the number of squares that we need, we are faced with the hard work of looking through our collection of photographs and choosing which ones we would like to use for each quilt square that we have prepared. The pictures can be arranged chronologically, by special occasions or just as a mosaic of favorites. At a local printing shop or store that imprints slogans and names on tee shirts for birthdays and special events, our favorite pictures can be stamped on the patches for our quilt. Then they can be sewn in place by hand or machine and completed with a backing fabric of our choice. Our quilts, rich in creativity and imagination, add a healing magic for our hearts, but more importantly provide a lifelong way of remembering that special person we miss so much. What a welcome addition our quilt is to any room in our home!

In case your energy level is so low or your heart is so overwhelmed by your loss that you couldn't even consider designing a Memory Quilt, but you feel it is something that would bring you comfort, there are catalog companies that offer to create a quilt or throw for you. All you have to do is send them what they require- perhaps a picture, name, dates or favorite saying (sometimes they have a standard saying) to be inscribed on the fabric and they do the rest. You, too, can feel the healing power of "cozy memories."

There is no age limit- all ages enjoy being wrapped in memories. Small children, teenagers, siblings, spouses, parents and grandparents- each can bask in the warmth and coziness of remembrance. What are you waiting for?

~reprinted from *Grief Digest*, Centering Corporation, Omaha, NE 402-553-1200 www.griefdigest.com



Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love ... without measure.. fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you.. for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved, and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted that they will always be.



In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me...still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, and, somehow, we would survive, and build on the ashes of our broken hearts. Building somehow in spite of our pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten.

What a bitter lesson! And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart... and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in the fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow. We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely gone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And though I would trade these blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

— In memory of Joey (2/25/99)

By Lisa Sculley ~ TCF, Jacksonville/Orange Park Chapter

Chapter Sharing Pages

	TELEPHONE FRIENDS	
	<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
Everett	Steve Robinson, daughter 24, drug overdose	508-728-4040
Campton, NH	Melinda & David Paul, daughter, 20, sudden cardiac arrest	603-726-8190

When Somebody Dies

When somebody dies, a cloud turns into
 an angel, and flies up to tell God
 to put another flower on a pillow.
 A bird gives the message back to
 the world and sings a silent prayer
 that makes the rain cry. People disappear,
 but they never really go away.
 The spirits up there put the sun to
 bed, wake up grass, and spin the
 earth in dizzy circles. Sometimes, you
 can see them dancing in a cloud during
 the day-time, when they're supposed
 to be sleeping. They paint the rainbows
 and also the sunsets and make
 waves splash and tug at the tide.
 They toss shooting stars and listen to
 wishes. And when they sing windsongs,
 they whisper to us, don't miss
 me too much. The view is nice
 and I'm doing just fine.

Chris Sears
 TCF-Lake/Porter County Chapter
 In Memory of Adam Widup

"DON'T STEAL MY GRIEF"

Don't try to make me feel better,
 By quipping your cute jokes.

Don't try to rob me of my pain,
 When I need it as my cloak.

I know you probably think,
 You're doing me a favor.

But what you don't understand,
 Is that my sadness is my savior.

Don't try to steal my right,
 To express my grief in my own way.

You see, I lost my child,
 And grief is the price that I must pay.

I need to feel the hurt and pain,
 As it beats inside my chest.

Don't try to steal my grief,
 When it's the only feeling I have left.

By Faye McCord, Co-Chapter Leader,
 TCF / Jackson, MS
 In loving memory of my son,
 Lane McCord (1/26/65 - 9/13/98)



LOVE NOTES



From Evie Benedetto. In Loving Memory of Christopher "Chris" Benedetto – son; Thomas "Guy" Benedetto – husband. Cannot believe it's been two years and loving memory of son "Chris", my angel. You are both with me always. Love & miss you so much. Evie/Mom XOXO

From Elaine & John Kingston. In Loving Memory of our daughter "Patty". Remembering you on your birthday, March 9th. Love from your family, Mom & Dad, Debbie, Steve & Susan, Wayne, Lisa & Joe, Pam & Neil and your nieces & Nephews; CJ, Matt, Marris, Heather, Jessica, Allison, John, Michael, Ashley, Alyssa & Kristen.

From Rick & Judy Young. In loving memory of our son, Micah, on his 21st birthday. Forever loved, forever missed. Love, Mom, Dad, J.C. and Logan

From Nancy Gelyookian. In loving memory of Andrew, on his 5th Anniversary. Lovingly remembered by his Mom, Dad & Michael, family members and friends

***Love Lives On** ~ by Amanda Bradley ~*

*Those we love are never really lost to us--we feel them in so many special ways—
through friends they always cared about and dreams they left behind, in beauty that they added to our days...*

in words of wisdom we still carry with us and memories that never will be gone...

Those we love are never really lost to us-- for everywhere their special love lives on.

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 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.