



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

November 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 and 3rd Wednesday 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:

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Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll-free: 877-969-0010
PH: 630-990-0010
FAX: 630-990-0246
www.thecompassionatefriends.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS 2 MEETINGS PER MONTH

- 11/7/11 Will I Laugh Again?**
Dave and Pat
- 11/16/11 Open Sharing Session**
Steve and Eileen
- 12/11/11 Sunday: Annual Candlelight Remembrance Service** - Details inside
There will be no other meetings in December
- Chapter Co-Leader: Carmen Pope 978-998-4087
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- Chapter Co-Leader: Mariann Lindquist 781-938-5562
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- Regional Coordinator: Rick Mirabile 781-740-1135
Rmirabile@comcast.net

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

Penney Jean

12/3/83 ~ 11/19/09

*Missing our Pretty Girl every day
With all our love and more,
Mom and Dad*

-and-

Nicholas Ryan Amirault

*"What the heart has once known,
it shall never forget."
You will always be in our hearts.
Love you, miss you ... forever,
Mom, Dad, Holly and family*

Chapter Sharing Pages



November Birthdays

Christopher "Chris" Benedetto son of Evie and Tom Benedetto
Theodore K. Cathcart III (Todd) son of Ted and June Cathcart
Max Eli Clayman son of Mike & Patti Clayman
Devin John Henderson son of Lori & Barry Henderson
Michael Joseph McNeil son of Mike & MaryJo McNeil
Keith Austin Pace son of John & Linda Pace
Harold E. Williamson son of Sandra Williamson



November Angel Dates

Nicholas Ryan Amirault son of Rick & JoAnne Amirault
Michael Amorella son of Peter & Patricia Amorella
Christopher "Chris" Benedetto son of Evie and Tom Benedetto
Steven John Connolly son of Brenda and Bob Connolly
Sarah Curley granddaughter of Richard and Joann Curley
Thomas "Scott" Gray son of Laura Gray
Ronald Richard Wetmore son of Lori Kearin Wetmore
Jeffrey Thomas Middlemiss son of David & Joyce Middlemiss
Michael Sawyer son of Diane and Herb Sawyer
Daniel M. Scafidi son of Martin Scafidi

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

As you read this, Thanksgiving will be approaching. This holiday can be especially difficult for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. As you are trying to cope with the hole in your heart, the void in your life, and the empty seat at the dinner table, you may doubt your ability to ever feel thankful about anything again. Even if you have reasons to feel grateful, you may be so immersed in your grief that you are unable to appreciate what is still good in your life. When you are sad, broken-hearted, angry, depressed, exhausted, and overwhelmed with thoughts of the child that is no longer here, there isn't much energy left to devote to gratitude.

I remember those days. I remember being consumed with what I had lost and unable to focus on what I still had. The tears, the guilt, the never-ending questions, the longing, and the pain occupied most of my waking hours. I felt cheated and victimized.

I know now that my involvement with The Compassionate Friends was instrumental in helping me to allow gratitude to eventually re-enter my life. As I reflect on my blessings at this time of year, I can honestly say that I am thankful for many reasons, including:

- I know that I am not alone.
- I still have a safe place where I can be open about my grief journey, even after more than 14 years.
- My relationships with certain family members and friends have strengthened and deepened as a result of my life experiences.
- I am more compassionate and more understanding than I used to be.
- I have survived the unthinkable.
- I have witnessed many other bereaved parents survive the unthinkable.
- I can laugh and enjoy life again and appreciate the beauty around me.
- I have seen other bereaved parents heal and begin to enjoy life again.
- I have learned to accept that grief is a journey and I realize that it will continue to affect me as my life evolves.

Thanks to all of you who have chosen to become involved in our chapter, whether you have attended only a couple of meetings or have been a "regular" for years. Though our journeys are individual ones, we all continue to benefit from sharing our burdens, our insights, and our compassion. For that I am grateful.

Carmen

**

TOEHOLDS

If you are out there and haven't been able to attend a meeting, or even if you have, but still find yourself "yo-yoing", you have to know that this is the way the road to recovery is. Would that it were a road that angled straight up, but it isn't. The road is full of hills and valleys, and you are up first and then down, thinking for a day or two that you have this thing under control, only to find yourself down in the valley again the next day.

What you can't see when you are in the middle of all this is that each time you slip back, you don't slip all the way back to the bottom of the hole. Each time you climb out, you make yourself some toeholds that enable you to give yourself a boost. You eventually learn that there are some things you can do to help yourself. These toeholds help you inch your way up to the top again. Also, they stop your slide so that you don't have to go to the bottom of that hole each time.

We make progress in such small amounts that it is difficult sometimes for use to realize that we are progressing. Try not to judge your progress from day to day, week to week, or even month to month. I find it better for me to judge my progress from year to year. That way I can better remember how I was at handling a particular event last year as compared to how I handled that event this year. I can see my progress and I am again encouraged to know that I am moving ahead. I'm thankful for my toeholds

By Mary Cleckley, TCF, Atlanta GA

Chapter Sharing Pages

"The Fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain"*

We don't know each other when we meet on the street, at church, or at a meeting, but once our loss is known, people quietly share their pain with us. When we are alone with someone, a voice is lowered, eyes are downcast, and in a whisper we hear "You probably don't know this, but I lost someone...". And for a few moments, we are immersed in each others pain, as someone shares their awful secret, knowing that we share a loss that is so profound that no one one truly "gets it" without having walked in our shoes. It may be a child gone for decades, a spouse we never knew, or an end so terrible it is never spoken of, but for just a moment we truly understand each other at a level so profound it cannot be described. It brings us a moment of peace to share our loss with another, and know we are not alone. Someone will quietly say "We need to talk...not now, but when we are alone", and you will know that they are fellow travelers on your journey. Strangely, they arrive from nowhere when you least expect it, and sometimes when you need it most.

I will not forget the snow plow driver clearing my driveway, who learned of my loss. He stopped in the driving snow, locked eyes with me, and in a very low voice said "I carry a seven year old boy in my head, I'll never forget him; I see him every day. That's all I can say." He climbed back into his truck and slowly turned to me and said "If you ever need anything, call me. You understand? Call me", and slowly drove away.

I remember the hardened woman at the RMV who stopped cold when she saw my son's death certificate, and locked eyes with me in an intense stare. She stopped my mumbled explanations about missing forms with a soft "Wait here", and spoke with the Manager, returning with my plates and receipt. "It gets better", she said softly, and called "Next".

The Police Officer on a detail on my street asked about my son. When I told him, his eyes grew wet, and he pulled off his glove and took my hand. "Whatever you need, whenever you need it" he said, handing me his card. "Call me" he said, "and I mean that".

As we arranged for a memorial stone, the woman at the Monument Company quietly shared her story with us. She lost two adult sons in two years, at the

same age as our son. We were instantly friends and confidants.

The bond is instant and deep; your eyes lock and feelings flow unspoken; you have things to share that are so private, yet you share them with this stranger who is suddenly closer than family. "We need to talk..." Yes, we do.

In a world of the well-meaning "I know how you feel" (how could you know?), or "It will get better" (no, it will get different, not better), we may feel angry at inept greeting card expressions of grief. We must not forget that there is no common language for grief in our culture, no shared set of ways of acting and speaking that address the need to reach out to others in this time of crisis. People do the best that they can, and we must accept the awkwardness and hesitation as simple acts of compassion.

Eventually, the time comes when you face another grieving parent who has no idea of your loss or your pain, and is facing the same torment that you live with every day. You watch for a private moment, and you whisper "We need to talk..."

We are fellow travelers on a rocky road; we are the Compassionate Friends, as Albert Schweitzer so eloquently put it, "we are the fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain."*

John MacDonald, TCF No Shore – Boston
*Quoted from Out of My Life and Thought, Albert Schweitzer

My son, a perfect little boy of five years and three months, had ended his earthly life. You can never sympathize with me; you can never know how much of me such a young child can take away. A few weeks ago I accounted myself a very rich man, and now the poorest of all. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Chapter Sharing Pages

TCF North Shore/Boston Annual Candlelight Remembrance Service

The Chapter will hold its annual Candlelight Remembrance Service on **Sunday evening, December 11, 2011 starting at 6:30 PM** at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church. This will coincide with The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting and will replace the regular sharing meetings in December. In case of snow, we will hold the service on **Monday, December 12th at 7:30 PM**. We will remember our children with readings, music and a slide show in a beautiful ceremony conducted by members of our group. Family members and friends are invited to attend. There will be a reception and a raffle after the non-denominational service. Please feel free to contribute refreshments for this reception and prizes for the raffle. In the past, members have donated items that are symbolic of our children, often with a butterfly or angel motif. We are grateful for any donation you are able to contribute.

During the service, we will present a **slide show** with pictures of all the "children" of our chapter. Cindi Bolivar has volunteered to coordinate the slide show. Photographs may be sent to her electronically at cinbol@gmail.com or by mail to: Cindi Bolivar, 28 Colburn Road, Reading, MA 01867. Pictures should be 5"x7" or smaller and **must be received by November 15th** in order to be included in the slide show. Please send the following information with the picture: child's name, birth and death dates, and age at time of death. Pictures of your child should be as close to their angel date as possible.

The **monthly birthday table** will also be available for families of children with **December** birthdays. Families who are unable to submit a photo of their child for the slide show may feel free to bring a photo to display on the general photo table.

We will need approximately 10 to 15 readers and 15 to 20 singers for the service. There will be **sign up sheets at the October 19th, November 7th and November 16th** meetings if you would like to participate. You may also contact the following chapter members if you would like to read or sing and cannot attend the October or November meetings.

Singers:

Reenie McCormack will coordinate the chapter choir. You need not be a "professional" singer to participate in our choir. If you would like to sing, please contact **Reenie McCormack** at **781-729-1878** or mmccormack141@gmail.com.

The choir will rehearse at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church on Sunday, December 4th, 2010 at 4:00 PM.

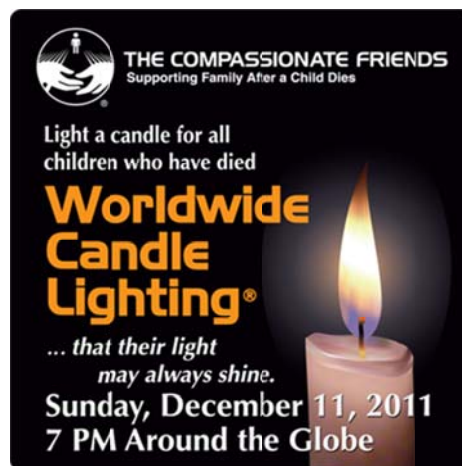
Readers:

Mariann Lindquist will coordinate our readers. Each volunteer will be given a selection to read aloud during the ceremony. You will receive your reading before the service in order that you can become familiar with the piece. If you would like to be one of the readers, please sign up at a meeting or contact **Mariann Lindquist** at **781-938-5562** or rdlindquist@rcn.com



Raffle Donations:

Maureen Dawkins will coordinate the raffle donations and sale of raffle tickets. If you would like to donate a prize for the raffle, please contact Maureen or bring the item to the event. TCF is a non-profit organization and we rely on the raffle ticket sales and donations to help defray the costs of running our chapter. Contact **Maureen Dawkins** at **978-372-8205**

If you need further information about this event, please feel free to contact the chapter co-leaders:
Mariann Lindquist **781-938-5562**
rdlindquist@rcn.com
Carmen Pope **978-998-4087**
carmenpoppe@comcast.net



Chapter Sharing Pages

	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.	
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
Melrose	Wayne Patick, son 22, suicide; intentional heroin overdose	781-662-9094
Everett	Steve Robinson, daughter 24, domestic violence	508-728-4040
Campton, NH	Melinda & David Paul, daughter, 20, sudden cardiac arrest	603-236-1561

Autumn Leaves

Autumn leaves
 encircle the still pond,
 like Narcissus
 engrossed in their own reflections.

Autumn wind
 cuts like a knife,
 opening wounds
 we thought had healed.

Autumn geese
 fly south in loud formation,
 leaving behind
 their summer memories.

We stand in the silence
 of fallen leaves,
 awaiting the storm
 of the coming winter.

You are in our thoughts
 during the changing seasons,
 in the daily reminders
 of the past and what is to come.

Mariann Lindquist
 TCF - North Shore/Boston Chapter

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
 fills my heart with dread.
 They'll all be feigning gladness,
 not a word about her said.
 These heavy shrouds of blackness
 enveloping my soul,
 pervasive, throat-catching,
 writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge,
 just express her name,
 so all sitting at the table,
 know I'm thankful that she came.

Though she's gone from us forever
 and we mourn to see her face,
 not one minute of her living,
 would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering,
 though my voice quivers, quakes,
 make a toast to all her living.
 That small tribute's all it takes.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
 from
 Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



From Patricia Amorella. In Loving Memory of Michael Amorella.. "Mike", our first born taken too soon. Our hearts are broken. We love and miss you everyday. Mom, Dad, Lisa, Pat & Michelle, Chris & Alyssa

From Sandra Williamson. In Loving Memory of Harold E. Williamson, Jr. In memory of my son Harold, I wish you a Happy Birthday. This year it will be on 11-11-11. I think of you everyday and you will always be in my heart and in my thoughts. We all miss you and love you very much. With Much Love and Hugs to you. Love Mom xoxo

From June & Ted Cathcart. In Loving Memory of Theodore K, (Todd) Cathcart III. It has been 20 years! You are forever in our hearts – We miss you dearly. With much love from all. Dad & Mom

From Claudette Jacob. In Loving Memory of Jennifer Jacob. You are with me every moment of every day. Halloween has always been our special holiday...and Thanksgiving was your favorite meal. How will I sit at the Thanksgiving table without you for the first time? My heart is broken as deeply as the love I had for you. You have left a legacy in your eleven years and all that know you honor it every day. You are my best girly in the worly.

PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Please send your Love Notes and donations by mail to **TCF No Shore/Boston, PO BOX 1117, Billerica MA 01821**. (do **NOT** send them to the editor), or give them to the leader at the monthly meetings. Please use the form below to assure notes are posted exactly as you want them.

Love Notes must be received by the **15th** of the month prior to the month you want the note published.

Love Gifts for future dates may be sent at any time – month to be published: _____

Love Gift from _____ In memory of _____

Message: _____

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 SEASONED 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 – November 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.