



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

October 2009

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:

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 10/5/09 Alan Pederson - in concert**
Sharing meeting in the Library
- 11/2/09 How our relationships have changed**
TBD

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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:*

STEPHEN DAME II

on the first anniversary of his passing.

**We are honored to have had you
as our son & brother for 19 years.
You were a remarkable young man
who possessed a beautiful spirit
and sensitive heart.
You enriched our lives so very much . . .
we smile wide when we think of you
and cry because we miss you so much.**

**We love you to eternity,
Dad, Mom and Christopher**

Chapter Sharing Pages



October Birthdays

Alyssa Lynne Nanopoulos
daughter of Andrew & Nancy Nanopoulos

Benjamin Thomas Huxtable
Grandson of Alaina & Peter Huxtable

Christian Frechette
grandson of Janet Frechette

James Vincent Barreira
son of Susan Barreira

Katie Emma Flett
daughter of Kathleen Flett

Katy Warde
daughter of Peg Warde

Matthew Charles Schille
son of Paul & Debra Schille

Stephanie Robinson
daughter of Steve Robinson



October Angel Dates

Cynthia A. Moores
daughter of Art and Barbara Moores

Daniel Noah Fine (Danny)
son of Gail and Stephen Fine

David Conant Siljeholm
son of Anita Siljeholm

Erik Sean Rakos
son of Frances Rakos

James Steven (Jimmy) Corliss
son of Linda Corliss

Michael Edward Lindberg Jr
son of Sylvia & Michael Lindberg

Patricia Gail Kingston
daughter of Elaine and John Kingston

Robert R Kerr
son of Bob and Rosalie Kerr

Scott Curley
son of Richard and Joann Curley

Stephen Dame II
son of Stephen & Karen Dame

Theodore K. Cathcart III (Todd)
son of Ted and June Cathcart

September omission:
Bryn Cosola
daughter of Bill and Nicole Cosola

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

I received a gift the other day, in the form of an e-mail. It was from my niece who was about 10 ½ months older than my son, Tom. She contacted me to wish me a happy birthday, but then proceeded to share some of her thoughts and feelings with me. My niece now has a 2-month-old baby boy. A couple of weeks before her son was born, she called me to ask if she could use *Thomas* as her son's middle name, in honor of her cousin, Tom. I was very touched and told her that it would be very meaningful to me to have her baby bear Tom's name.

My niece reported to me in her e-mail that she had recently had a conversation with a friend whose mother had died about 5 months ago. She was checking to see if her friend was doing "OK" and wanted her friend to know that she was thinking about her. Her friend commented that my niece's concern meant so much to her because everyone else seemed to have forgotten about her and her situation, and that the support and sympathy were no longer coming her way.

My niece then continued, letting me know that she still thinks about Tom, too . . .

"It's been 12 years since he's passed away and I still think about him...every rainbow I see, every soccer team, every 11 year old boy, every time our family gets together, July 6th, December 5th...I think about him...and I think about you, Jeff, Kelly and Dave. I am also thinking about Christopher these days, too...especially after having Jonathan; I couldn't imagine what you went through. I suppose I'm writing to let you know that I haven't forgotten Tom and I never will. I was extremely close to him (when we were able to get together and play) and his death had a tremendous impact on my life...I can't even thank you enough for letting me give Jonathan Tom's name as his middle--it completes his name and makes it strong--gives it good character."

I share this for those of you who are frustrated about family members and friends who seemingly may not understand what we go through as bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. I do believe that the grief process is an evolution. Sometimes we may not discover how the loss of our children may have impacted our friends and other members of our family for quite a long time. I never expected this e-mail from my niece, but I was so grateful to receive it, especially 12 years later.

Carmen

CELEBRATE THE CHILDREN CONCERT **Next meeting: October 5th, 2009**

At our next chapter meeting, our members and guests will have an opportunity to attend a performance by singer/songwriter, Alan Pedersen, who also happens to be a bereaved parent. Alan has graced us with his talent on two other occasions, in September 2006 and May 2008. We are fortunate that he will be in this area in October and are eager to welcome him again. The performance will begin at 7:30 PM, which is our usual meeting time.

For those members who would prefer to attend a regular sharing session instead of Alan's performance, we will provide the opportunity to do so that evening.

If you are interested in learning more about Alan and his music, please feel free to log onto his website at www.everashleymusic.com

Alan will also be performing for some of our neighboring chapters. His calendar is posted on his website and you may contact the other chapters by logging onto www.tcfnoshore-boston.org. The contact information for surrounding chapters is listed on the "Neighboring Chapters" page.

Chapter Sharing Pages

The Talking Pumpkin

Halloween always was a special time at our house. When my son was a year old, my husband got out an old intercom set he had packed away and with its help created a special pumpkin-one that talked! Our son was intrigued by it, as was his sister later and all the neighborhood children who came and discovered our unusual pumpkin. We continued that tradition over the years. My husband always handled the chatting with the visitors from his comfortable chair in the den. My job has always been to not only hand out the goodies, but to also make sure that the little ones know he's a friendly pumpkin and not to be feared when they come upon him for the first time.

We went through all the stages over the years with our own two children; believing (like in Santa Claus and the Good Fairy); doubting (I'd like to believe, but something's all wrong here, and the voice sounds awfully familiar); discovering (if I look under the leaves I can see where the wires come out of the house!); to joining in on the charade and even speaking for the pumpkin sometimes.

That first Halloween after our son died, we found it was no longer a favorite night and we couldn't bring out the talking pumpkin. We had a plastic one instead of the usual carved, real pumpkin, intending to get through the night as quickly as possible. The memories were too painful, but we had failed to realize how much the children would miss him. They approached our house as usual, yelling hello to the pumpkin and were disappointed when he didn't answer. I told the kids he had laryngitis and they left candy for him, to help him get better soon.

The next year, we returned his voice and have had him ever since. I relive many memories on Halloween night as I see everything from the little ones with stars in their eyes as they earnestly talk with the pumpkin and believe, to the blase' older ones who have to let the world know they're too old for such foolishness!

I know we are creating memories and some years down the road, a young father or mother will tell their child about a talking pumpkin who only came out on Halloween night at the Cleckleys'. That thought has helped make Halloween a special night again for us; one that gets us in touch once more with our children in all stages of childhood. The memories of older and simpler times do bathe and soothe the painful scars of more recent ones. For you; too, I hope.

Mary Cleckley, BP/USA

~reprinted from Ford County Chapter Newsletter
October 2004



Halloween

It is here, this day of merriment
and children's pleasure.
Gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door
of your house.
And the other children
come to the door of your mind.

Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.
They do not shout.
Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween night,
they stand at the door of your mind -
and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of Halloween -
a smile and a tear.

~WINTERSUN by Sascha

Chapter Sharing Pages

"Suicide: How do we say it?"

From the moment we learned of our daughter's death, I knew that the word "suicide" had the power to erase her life while emblazoning her death in neon letters in the minds of her friends and colleagues.

During the unremitting misery of those early days, I even toyed with the idea of telling no one she was gone, willing her to stay alive in the thoughts of those who knew her, forgetting that I'd already notified our family and closest friends. It was a fairy tale wish I contrived as a way of allowing myself a momentary escape from the unthinkable reality of her death. If her death were never acknowledged, would she still be here?

My fantasy vanished in the cold light of the days that followed. I knew that we could never dishonor Rhonda's memory by concealing her suicide. I wrote a letter to friends and relatives, informing them of the events leading up to her death. I hoped my letter would quell the inevitable whispers by openly acknowledging her depression and her decision to end her own life. I implored them to speak often and openly about her to us; to do otherwise would deny her existence.

I never intended to embark on a campaign to confront, let alone eradicate, the stigma of suicide. What mattered most was that we who loved Rhonda must not let the circumstances of her death diminish her memory or her accomplishments. I explained that she had "taken her own life" or that "she died of suicide."

An expression I refused to use then and refuse to use to this day, is the despicable "committed suicide," with its implications of criminality. Historically, that term was an instrument of retaliation against the survivors, and it has no place in today's enlightened society.

Many people prefer to say, "completed suicide," but as a parent who witnessed my child's 20-year struggle against the demons of clinical depression, I don't care much for that, either. "Died of suicide" or "died by suicide" are accurate, emotionally-neutral ways to explain my child's death.

My first encounter with suicide occurred many

years ago when my dentist, a gentle family man in his mid 30's, took his own life. Since that time, I have known neighbors, relatives, friends and other hard-working, highly respected individuals who died this way. I've facilitated meetings in which grieving parents declined to speak about their children because they couldn't handle the group's reactions to the dreaded "s" word. I've known parents who never returned to a chapter meeting because of negative comments about the way that their child died.

Rhonda was a gifted scholar, writer and archaeologist who, like my mother, suffered from adult-onset manic depression (also called bipolar disorder). She made a lasting contribution in her field, and a wonderful tribute to her life and her work appeared in *American Antiquity*, Journal of the Society for American Archaeology (October, 1994).

Both my daughter and my mother suffered tremendously in their struggles to conquer and conceal their illness. Neither of them won that battle, but my mother responded to medications that minimized the highs and lows, and she died of cancer at 87. Sadly, doctors never discovered a magic formula that could offer Rhonda the same relief. She ended her own life at age 36, after a year of severe depression that was triggered by life stresses beyond her control. I saw her battle firsthand, and I witnessed her valiant struggle to survive. She wanted desperately to live; she died because she thought she had no alternative.

In his revealing book, *Telling Secrets*, the great theologian Frederick Buechner describes his father's suicide, which occurred when Buechner was just a boy. The conspiracy of silence that was imposed on Buechner and his brother had a profound effect on their development and their relationships with other family members. "We are as sick as our secrets," he concludes.

We whose children have taken their own lives must do all that we can to help eradicate the secrecy and stigma that surround their deaths. If we allow these to persist, we allow their lives to be diminished. We owe our children more than that.

© 1999 by Joyce Andrews, TCF/Sugar Land, Texas
~lovingly lifted from Special Suicide Newsletter by Kitty Reeves

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

PHOTOS WANTED!

NEW THIS YEAR: We will present a slide show with pictures of all the “children” of our chapter. Cindi Bolivar has volunteered to coordinate the slide show. Photo's 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 5x7 or smaller and must be received by November 15th to be included in the slide show. Please send the following information with the picture; Childs name as you want it shown, birth and death dates, age at time of death.

If you are interested in participating in the ceremony, there is plenty of time to sign up! Approximately 10-15 readers and 15-20 singers will be needed. There will be sign up sheets at the October 5th and November 2nd meetings if you would like to participate. You may also contact the following Chapter members: singers: Reenie McCormack at 781-729-1878 or mmccormack2@mac.com; potential readers should contact Mariann Lindquist at 781-938-5562 or rdlindquist@rcn.com.



The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe as they light candles for one hour on the second Sunday in December to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries. Again this year, our chapter will plan our Candle Lighting to coincide with the Worldwide event. More details next month.....

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



In Loving Memory of Stephan Dame, II. In Loving Memory of our son Stephan Dame II on his 20th birthday, Sept. 6th. We miss you so much! Your smile, personality & sensitivity. Love, Mom, Dad & Christopher.

In Loving Memory of Patricia Kingston. In Loving Memory of "Patty" on the 15th anniversary of her death, October 17th. Love, Mom, Dad, Debbie, Susan & Steve, Wayne, Lisa & Joe, Pam & Neil and your nieces & nephews; CJ, Mark, Marissa, Heather, Jessica, Allison, John, Michael, Ashley, Alyssa & Kristen.

In Loving Memory of Christian Frechette. Christian, missing you gets harder everyday, but I love you more each day and I pray you know that. Love, Nana

In Loving Memory of Daniel (Danny) Noah Fine on his 11th anniversary. What we have truly loved, we cannot really lose. Love, Mom, Dad, Aron and Rebecca

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 – OCTOBER 2009



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.