



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

October 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.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS 2 MEETINGS PER MONTH

10/3/11 Grief Under 2 Years / Over 2 Years

Penny and Carmen

10/19/11 Open Sharing Session

Penny and Dave

11/7/11 Will I Laugh Again?

Dave and Pat

11/16/11 Open Sharing Session

Steve and Eileen

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

Gina Marie Franklin

You are in our thoughts and prayers,
and are still a part of our family
even though you were only with us
for a brief moment in time.

Love,
Mom, Marla, Debra and Billy

Note: if you would like to sponsor the web site for a month in memory of your child please contact Carmen Pope. We rely on sponsors to defray the cost of maintaining and updating the web site.

Chapter Sharing Pages



October Birthdays

James Vincent Barreira son of Susan Barreira
Matthew Charles Schille son of Paul & Debra Schille
Alyssa Lynne Nanopoulos daughter of Andrew & Nancy Nanopoulos
Katy Warde daughter of Peg Warde
Christian Frechette grandson of Janet Frechette
Jason Foster son of Michelle Foster



October Angel Dates

Scott Curley son of Richard and Joann Curley
Daniel Noah Fine (Danny) son of Gail and Stephen Fine
Stephanie Robinson daughter of Steve Robinson
Kallie Reid daughter of Hazel Reid
Stephen Dame II son of Stephen & Karen Dame
Patricia Gail Kingston daughter of Elaine and John Kingston
Erik Sean Rakos son of Frances Rakos
Michael Edward Lindberg Jr son of Sylvia & Michael Lindberg
David Conant Siljeholm son of Anita Siljeholm
Robert R Kerr son of Bob and Rosalie Kerr
Theodore K. Cathcart III (Todd) son of Ted and June Cathcart
James Steven (Jimmy) Corliss son of Linda Corliss
Cynthia A. Moores daughter of Art and Barbara Moores

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

We had a good Labor Day meeting, in spite of the muggy weather. We spent the evening discussing the grief process. Prior to the meeting, I had reread the chapter entitled "The Five Stages of Grief" in the final book written by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross with a coauthor David Kessler entitled On Grief and Grieving. After opening the meeting, I read my summary of the grief process as it relates to denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. As the authors emphasized, the stages are designed as a framework for understanding grief. They are offered as tools to help us navigate and learn to live with our loss. The authors also stated that there is not a fixed time line or a linear progression and that "Our grief is as individual as our lives."

We then discussed whether we even agree with the concept of grief having "stages." We found that most of the descriptions related to these stages correspond with our personal experiences in processing grief. It's just that they do not really proceed in a linear fashion or happen one at a time. Generally, we experience a mix of disbelief and various emotions such as deep sadness and anger, as we work our way through the reality of our loss and hope that we will again be able to experience some joy and meaning in our life. During the discussion, it became evident that everyone experiences grief differently. For example, some of us have less anger and more sadness. It also appears that although we have much in common, we also differ in where we are in our grief. That seems to be one of the benefits of Compassionate Friends meetings, because we can understand and share our insights. I know that I always learn new things as I listen to others in the group.

It has been more than nine years since my eight-year-old son Joel died in a sudden and tragic car accident. I can definitely look back and see that I have made progress during this time. Many of the feelings I experienced in the beginning have softened or are less important. They no longer take a center stage in my daily life. One of the times that is still difficult for me is when Andrew goes back to school after Labor Day. This year, as he starts his sophomore year in high school, it has been compounded because our neighbor, who was Joel's best friend, has headed off to college. I empathize with this boy's parents, because he is an

only child and they will now have an empty nest. I also think about their son's enthusiasm as he starts out on this new adventure. The inevitable "what ifs" and regrets begin to surface. I don't see these as any particular stage in my grief. Thoughts about what Joel might be doing or could have become help me to remember him more intensely, and also bring about a deep sadness for what has been lost, both to our family and the life he could have lived.

During our recent meeting, many of you who attended shared fond recollections about your children. Those memories brought smiles to all of us as they were being shared. Under the joyful memories there will also be sorrow. Grief is an emotional roller coaster, and we have no choice but to stay on this ride. Eventually, we learn to take advantage of the days when the roller coaster slows down and we get a break. That may be an opportunity to try to come to terms with the physical absence of our children, grandchildren and siblings. It will never be OK, but we will gradually learn to live with the fact that they are gone.

We can heal by remembering them, recollecting with others and reorganizing our lives, as we learn to adjust to a world without our loved ones who have died. We can try to reinvest in life by strengthening our relationships with the other people who matter to us. We can establish a different but still meaningful relationship with the one we have lost by recognizing the role they still play in our life, and thereby feel close to them in a new way. We can reach out to become more involved, and begin to make new connections with others and with ourselves. We do not deny our feelings, but we do change, grow and evolve. As the authors of On Grief and Grieving remind their readers "we cannot fully reinvest until we have fully grieved, and this takes time."

We are not grief experts, but we are certainly experts when it comes to our own grief. We know that reinvesting does not mean forgetting. I'd like to share a final quote from a different source stating that "the loss does not go away, but we do learn to live with it." I wish you all the time you need during this difficult process, and please remember that you are not alone.

Mariann

Chapter Sharing Pages

Cycling Through Grief

When time allows and weather permits, I often indulge in hour-long bike rides. This habit is, in part, a fitness routine, a way to spend time outside, and a means of connecting with my son, Tom. Of my children, Tom was the one who developed a strong interest in biking. As a toddler, he thoroughly enjoyed riding in the baby seat on the back of my bike as we toured through Salem and Marblehead. When he mastered his own bicycle, he often rode around our neighborhood in Danvers and used his bike as a means of transportation to and from school. The local bike shop was one of his favorite stops, and he created a biking "journal" as one of his elementary school English projects. When he was 7 years old, Tom and I rode our bikes 6 miles around Little Lake Sunapee in New London, NH, which I now realize was quite an accomplishment for a child his age. At age 10, he decided he "needed" a new bike. Since his "old" bike was still in good condition, we agreed to contribute one-half the cost of a new bike if he paid for the other half from his own savings. Through his determination, he was ultimately able to buy himself a new bike in February 1997, a couple of months after he turned eleven. He was both excited and proud. On Memorial Day weekend that year, his soccer team participated in a local tournament. Tom opted to ride his bike to one of the games instead of being driven. After the game was over, he did not return home at the expected time, so I drove back to the field out of concern. Before I reached the field, a driver ahead of me had stopped to allow a child on a bicycle to cross the street. That child was Tom. When I spotted him, I was simultaneously relieved that he was OK, and filled with pride that he was learning how to maneuver his bike safely through suburban traffic. Less than two months later, on July 4th weekend, we spent the holiday with family in NH. Tom and I brought our bikes along so we could take a trip around the lake. As we were driving to NH, Tom noticed that the bikes appeared to be rather unstable on the rack, so we stopped the car in the middle of a strong thunderstorm to secure the bikes, after which we continued on our way. I did not know then that Tom would die only three days later as a result of a boating accident. I will never forget how surreal the ride home was at the end of that weekend. Tom's bike was on the rack at the rear of our minivan; his younger sister and brother were in the back seat; but he was missing.

We often speak of our need to stay connected with our deceased children. I have found that biking is one of the ways that helps me to satisfy that need. In the process, I expend physical energy, I observe beautiful scenery, and I remember the times I spent biking with Tom. It has become a very therapeutic exercise for me on a physical, spiritual and emotional level. Last summer, as I was progressing through one of my frequented routes, it occurred to me that my bike rides are somewhat analogous to my grief journey.

When I ride, I typically encounter stretches of the road where the pavement is less than desirable. These rough areas test my balance and my coordination. I put forth my best effort to navigate carefully and am reasonably successful at steering clear of the worst ruts and bumps. However, there are times when the traffic is unforgiving, or the sun angle is blinding, and no matter how hard I try, I end up getting bounced around on the rough pavement. Given the option, I would definitely choose the smoother roads. However, after traveling on bumpy roads over the course of many rides, I have discovered that I now have a deeper, more genuine appreciation for the smooth, well-paved stretches. I have also come to accept the fact that very few journeys are completely smooth.

My typical bike routes are not devoid of hilly terrain. Some of the hills are rolling and gradual, while others are long and steep. In order to reach the top, I find that I must exert more energy and shift gears more frequently. On the more challenging uphill stretches, I have found it easier not to focus on the top of the hill, as that destination sometimes seems like an impossible goal. Instead, I keep my eyes on the road just a few yards ahead of me and I concentrate on my breathing. Before I know it, I have managed to reach the top of the hill. This accomplishment has several benefits. Usually, when I have reached the top of a hill, the road either levels off or begins to pitch downward, which means I can coast for a while, allowing myself to catch my breath and to give my legs a needed rest. In addition, I derive a sense of achievement from having met the uphill challenge and I am reassured that I will be able to tackle other challenges in the future.

On some of my rides, I have run into unexpected developments, necessitating a change in plans. I have sometimes been forced to take detours due to road construction. On other occasions, I have had to stop suddenly because I was approaching a railroad crossing just as a commuter train was

Chapter Sharing Pages

about to pass through. These “surprises” were initially frustrating, as they interrupted my momentum; but in hindsight, I benefited from the experiences. When I was forced to follow detours, I discovered new roads that I had never traveled, thereby experiencing different scenery and learning alternate ways to get around. When I was forced to stop for a train, it was an opportunity to slow down and regroup, which then enabled me to tackle the rest of my journey with renewed energy.

I have also learned that, even when I travel the same route, no two rides are exactly alike. There are so many factors out of my control that can influence a particular trip, such as the time of day, the outdoor temperature, the wind velocity, the wind direction, the amount of other vehicular traffic, and the willingness of drivers to share the road. Some rides are peaceful and others are more frantic. Even factors that are supposedly within my control are variable, such as my attitude. There are days when I am eager and ready to jump on my bike, and others when I have to talk myself into it because it feels like too much work.

If I were to substitute “grief journey” for “bike ride” in the paragraphs above, much of this essay would still make sense.

-Grief follows a difficult road, full of ruts and bumps. We will not always be able to avoid the rough “terrain”. At times, the going is smoother, and when this happens, we should allow ourselves to “enjoy the ride”. In some ways, having to deal with the intensity of our grief enables us, in time, to appreciate more deeply the blessings and the joys in our lives.

-Some of the challenges we encounter as we grieve are incredibly difficult. There are times when we think we’ll never survive, never reach the top of the hill. We must try to remember to focus on one day at a time, to take care of ourselves in the process, and to “shift gears” or take breaks from grieving when we feel the need. As we progress, we will continue to meet new challenges, but we will have learned the coping techniques that will enable us to deal with them and we will be able to keep moving forward.

-As we grieve, we may be led down some unexpected paths. We must try to keep an open mind, as this will allow us to learn new strategies and to face our challenges with renewed energy.

-Grief is not an exact science; every individual deals with it differently and it is a continually evolving process for each individual. Many

uncontrollable factors play into our grief. There are days when our attitude defeats us and other days when our attitude inspires us. We must try to be flexible and to allow ourselves to discover the many different ways of traveling this route. There is no one right way. Let us remember to take care of ourselves along the way and to allow our Compassionate Friends to help us when the journey becomes overwhelming.

Carmen Pope
TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter



Seasons of the Heart

A few short months ago, I sat on my cottage deck and listened to the loons and the cracking of the ice as Winter shed its cloak and Spring shone through. Once again I sit and observe the wonders of nature. The green and gold of the Autumn leaves shimmer in the frosty air and their reflections are captured on the glass image of the crystal clear waters.



How much like the changing of the seasons is the process of grief. One season can be dark, gloomy, and filled with despair, then burst out into a season of color, life, and hope. Following an emotional high, the comfort of Autumn surrounds us as the cycle of life revolves and the sparkle returns to our eyes.

With the passing of each season comes not an ending but a new beginning. And as the seasons change, we, too, will change. We will pass through the tunnel of despair and on to the eternal light that only we who have experienced the living hell can come to understand.

Is this not nature’s way of healing the season of the heart?

Gen Linski, TCF Southwestern Manitoba Canada

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	781-622-9904
Everett	Steve Robinson, daughter 24, domestic violence	508-728-4040
Campton, NH	Melinda & David Paul, daughter, 20, sudden cardiac arrest	603-236-1561

TCF Annual Candlelight Ceremony – Volunteers needed!

Preparations are beginning for our Annual TCF Candlelight Ceremony to be held in December.

The event will be held in December, on the second Sunday of the month, in conjunction with the World Wide National event, or as close to it as possible depending on the availability of the church.

For those of you who have attended this ceremony in the past, you know that we rely on our membership participation. The committee needs volunteers for readings and singers. The readings are short and will be sent to each reader in advance so you may prepare for the evening. The songs are simple and you don't have to be a "singer" to join the choir – all voices are welcome.

We will also be looking for donations for our annual raffle – any items are welcome but as always, items that relate to our loss with symbols such as Butterflies and Angels have particular interest. In the next few weeks if you see something when you are out shopping that you think would make a nice donation please let us know.

For those of you who are newly bereaved, this is an annual event where we come together in verse and song to remember the children we have lost. It is a moving and emotional evening, but it gives us one more opportunity to reflect on the lives of our children.

Watch for more details in the next newsletter. If you have questions in the meantime please contact Maureen McCormack - mmccormack2@mac.com ; (781) 729-1878 OR Mariann Lindquist – rdlindquist@rcn.com ; 781-938-5562

Photo's Wanted

We will once again be collecting photos of the children for our slide show which will be run during the annual Candlelighting Ceremony in December. We will add to the current slide show, so if you have already sent in pictures of your child you do not need to resubmit. For the newly bereaved parents in our chapter, we invite you to send up to 3 photos of your child to be included in the show. Photos should be of your child as close to their angel date as possible, and should display your child's personality when possible. Group photos do not work well as the purpose is to put the emphasis on your child, not the family. Please send photos electronically when possible to: cinbol@gmail.com . Hard copy may be sent to: Cindi Bolivar 28 Colburn Road, Reading MA 01867.

In the Fall

In the fall
 When amber leaves are shed
 Softly - Silently,
 Like tears that wait to flow
 I watch and grieve.

My heart beats sadly
 In the fall,
 'Tis then I miss you most of all.

Lily De Lauder, TCF/Van Nuys, CA

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE NOTES



From Linda Corliss. In Loving Memory of my son Jimmy Corliss. I love and miss you every day. I wish I could have the chance to give you just one more hug. Love you, Mom

From Gail & Steve Fine In loving Memory of (Danny) Noah Fine, 13th Anniversary. "The real voyage, whatever the boat is into the soul." You are always on our minds and forever in our hearts. Love, Mom, Dad, Aron, & Rebecca.

From Janet Frechette. In Loving Memory of Christian Frechette. We think of you each and every day with love. Love Mom, Dad, Cam, Ashton, Caden, Reese & Nana

From Elaine & John Kingston. In Loving Memory of our daughter "Patty". Remembering you on October 7th. Love, Mom & Dad, Debbie, Steve & Susan, Wayne, Lisa & Joe, Pam & Neil and your nieces & nephews, CJ, Matthew, Marissa, Heather, Jessica, Allison, John, Michael, Ashley, Alyssa & Kristen.

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 – October 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.