



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Newsletter

September 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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UPCOMING MEETINGS

9/7/10 **NOTE TUES NITE DUE TO THE HOLIDAY**
How Grief is Affected by Seasonal Changes – Eileen

10/4/10 **Staying Connected to our Children**
Cindi

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

Joey Bolivar

*Gone but not forgotten,
you are always in our hearts
and on our minds.*

*Love Mom, Dad, Jenn
and all your extended family*

and

Kelly Dawkins Lavigne

Your little girls are growing up so fast.

Shauna sews and loves to cook,

Erin now shops for her own clothes.

They miss their "Mommy" very much.

Special hugs are sent to you;

we have you tucked away in our hearts.

We love you so much and miss you.

Ronnie, Erin, Shauna, Mom and Dad

Remembering Our Children



September Birthdays

Robert Joseph Biondo
son of Lorraine Biondo

Joey Bolivar
son of Reggie and Cindi Bolivar

Derek Anthony Broughton
son of Edward and Louise Broughton

Glenn Buttrick
son of Heidi Scott

Scott Curley
son of Richard and Joann Curley

Stephen Dame II
son of Stephen and Karen Dame

Kelly Dawkins Lavigne
daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins

Shane Lambert
grandson of Irene Lambert

James Anthony Keen
son of Nina Keen O'Connor

Erik Sean Rakos
son of Frances Rakos



September Angel Dates

Samantha Rose Baer
granddaughter of Ruth and Martin Baer

James Vincent Barreira
son of Susan Barreira

Bryn Cosola
daughter of Bill and Nicole Cosola

Kelly Dawkins Lavigne
daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins

Jeff Madden
son of Claire Madden

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 we, as bereaved parents, share our stories with each other, there is, at times, a tendency to compare the circumstances surrounding the death of our children, whether that may be the age of the child, the cause of death, or the individual family situations. As impossible as it was to imagine this ultimate tragedy before it happened to us, it can be equally difficult to imagine how we would have responded if the same tragedy had occurred under different circumstances.

When I was newly bereaved, I remember focusing on the circumstances surrounding my son's death. I believed that his death could not have occurred more tragically and that losing a child at age eleven had to be the most difficult time to lose a child. Less than two months after my son died, a friend of mine had been in contact with another family whose youngest son had recently died in an accident. When these newly bereaved parents heard that we had lost our oldest child, they commented that losing one's oldest child must be even worse than what they were experiencing. When I heard this comment, I knew that this was not the case and that I would have been equally devastated if any of my children had died.

So, as I began to listen to more and more individual stories at Compassionate Friends meetings, I slowly began to realize that my family's situation was not worse than anyone else's. I even went through a slightly irrational phase of feeling "grateful" that my son had not died under more tragic circumstances. Down the road, I learned that it was not productive to compare the circumstances surrounding Tom's death with the circumstances of any other bereaved parent. I realized that no matter how our children died, there is no turning back, no way to change the outcome.

At a recent chapter meeting, one of our members shared her very insightful thoughts regarding this occasional tendency we have to compare our situations. In essence, she stated that we really should not be focusing on the circumstances surrounding our child's death or the age of the child at the time of death or our unique family situations. What is truly important is that we are all mourning the loss of a unique child with whom we shared a unique relationship and who can never be replaced. That is what we have in common and it is the most important reason for how and why we can support each other through the process.

Let us continue to share our stories with open minds so that we can learn from each other and help each other to cope.

Carmen

Remember

When you remember me,
it means that you have carried something of who I am with you,
that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are.

It means that you can summon me back to your mind
even though countless years and miles may stand between us...

It means that even after I die,
you can still see my face and hear my voice
and speak to me in your heart.

For as long as you remember me, I am never entirely lost.....

from *Whistling in the Dark* by Frederick Buechner

Chapter Sharing Pages

The Return of Joy

He'd begun to wake up in the morning with something besides dread in his heart. Not happiness exactly, not eagerness for the new day, but a kind of urge to be eager, a longing to be happy. ~Jon Hassler

It comes upon us so gradually that we scarcely recognize the change - the moving out of the valley of despair where the future looks perpetually grim, into a more pleasant land. Then one day we may think to ourselves...Wait a minute. This feels different! For now, instead of a sorrowful landscape marked by only occasional moments of happiness, we realize we inhabit a land where we are happy and content more of the time than not. The periods of desolation are now the exception, not the rule.

Without knowing it, we have slipped into a new country. This will take some getting used to. Of course we'll have relapses, which are really not relapses at all but a way of continuing to deepen the grooves in the brain that tell us who we are, now that our loved one has gone. But the shift is a matter for astonishment and gratitude and sometimes for a quiet waiting to see what other wisdom and self-knowledge may come to us.

I welcome, as a blessing from my loved one, the return of light and joy to my life.

From: Healing After Loss by Martha Whitmore Hickman

The most beautiful people
we have known are those
who have known defeat,
known suffering,
known struggle, known loss,
and have found their way out of the depths.

These persons have an appreciation,
a sensitivity and an understanding of life,
that fills them with compassion,
gentleness and a deep loving concern.
Beautiful people do not just happen.
Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

To My Friends

This is my pain
Let me feel it.
Don't tell me not to cry.
I know you mean well, dear friend.
But telling me not to cry,
Tells me you don't understand.

But, how could you, really?
Have you lost a child?
Have you given birth, loved and laughed,
And then watched him die?

This is my pain.
Let me feel it.
Be patient with me when I want to scream
to cry
or be crabby
or talk about him
or be alone.

This is my pain.
Let me feel it.
I know you'd take it all away,
if you could.
But you can't.

I can't avoid it,
Or stuff it down somewhere,
Or run away from it.
Because it always finds me again.
The cold, hard fact is,
That I had a child that died,
And it hurts.
So I know, that this is my pain,
And I have to feel it.
To get through it.

Carolyn Johnson, TCF Yuba City, CA
From We Need Not Walk Alone, summer 1994

Chapter Sharing Pages

The first Monday of the Month

It's here again. It is time to go to my Compassionate Friends' Meeting. I don't want to go. Why rake up all the pain and sorrow? The awful memories of that late night phone call? Why talk about it again?

But, I go. Many familiar faces greet me. Men and women I have gotten to know through these last seven pain-filled years. Men and women who have shared their grief and recovery with me.

Then it kicks in. I see the tears steaming down the face of a newly bereaved person – or the empty eyes and I reach out my hand – ever so gently. They open up just a little and pour out their grief to me. They tell me about their child, their grandchild, their brother, their sister. They tell me about the “phone call.”

They are safe here. No one expects anything more of them than they can give. They will be listened to. Really listened to.

They will learn ways to live one day at a time from those of us who have had to learn to live this way too. How to make a plan to survive birthdays, holidays and weekends. They'll hear stories about surviving that first, second and third year. They'll hear that, yes – grief is a physical pain in the heart, in the gut. Yes, it feels like you are dying.

They'll hear that, after a while, some times a long while, they may choose life again. That perhaps it is OK to laugh and sing and smell the beautiful roses again. After a while the memories get less painful and will bring a smile to their hearts.

Now I remember, that this is why I come to my monthly meeting of The Compassionate Friends. This is why!

We end the meeting reading our solidarity prayer. I feel a little more peaceful now. Like I'm one of many sharing a grief so profound and deep that only someone in the same circumstances can truly understand. I am not alone.

*Deniece G. Pendleton
Northshore/Boston Chapter TCF
(Faith's Mother)*

Everything is a First – a sibling's perspective

Everything is a first. Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me . . . NEVER!

The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible?

The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concerns were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL.

Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents? There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this.

People ask me “How are you?” Here is my answer: “I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong.”

*Lisa Ann Jones
Avoda, PA*

*“When inspiration has become hidden,
when we feel ready to give up,
this is the time when healing can be found
in the tenderness of pain itself.”*

--Pema Chodron

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

We have a Choice

How to meet sorrow is one of the most difficult of human problems, and no day dawns that someone does not have to face it. The bitterest pain of all is the loss of a beloved child. So this is IT! The child was a loan – not a gift – a loan of love with dark brown hair and laughing eyes. At 14 years, a six-foot promise of wonders yet to come. Childhood can be a nightmare. And suddenly he is gone, three places at the table almost impossible to bear. Denial, anger, and eventually with unrelenting anguish, the reality – Jimmy is dead. For what cannot be altered must be accepted. Thank God nothing lasts forever. Neither pain nor joy.

Learn to forgive yourself again and again and again – be at least as forgiving to yourself as you would be to another parent. Ten long years later, I realize he never changed. He is still my laughing, sometimes naughty son who contributed much joy, heartache, pleasure, humor and concern in his 14 short years of life.

I'll be ever grateful that we were in the same lifetime. I'm the one who has changed. His legacy to me has been boundless. We, parents with a mutual bond, have a choice. We either become less in mind and spirit, caught up in a treacherous web of denial, self-guilt and bitterness, or we can finally learn to use our grief in a positive fashion. Our progress is often slow and mostly painful, but who would elect to cope with such a devastating process and not be changed.

If there is no change, the hurt, pain and grief has been for naught. Nothing works for everyone, and nothing works all the time. We have only ourselves and one another. Sometimes we feel that may not be much to offer but that's all there is. Misery is optional – there is another choice. You have a right to every one of your feelings – and to share them if you wish.

Joan Axford, TCF Milwaukee WI



LOVE NOTES



From Brian Sullivan. In Loving Memory of Colm. Always in my thoughts. Wish every day you were here. Love, Dad, Terry, Shaleagh, Justin, Maura, Corey.

From John & Elaine Kingston. In Loving Memory of our daughter "Patty". Thinking of you always. Love, Mom & Dad.

From Cindi and Reggie Bolivar. In Loving Memory of our son, Joey. Thinking of you as we celebrate the September birthdays in our family and missing the youngest of the Bolivar men – you are missed everyday but your spirit lives on, especially in your nephew Creighton who is your namesake in every way! Happy Birthday buddy, Love Mom & Dad

The Miracle by Alex Sacco

This is a true story even though it sounds impossible and ridiculous. In 1999 my amazing and outgoing Godfather and Uncle Aram died of a heroin overdose. He loved the band "Queen". He had many friends, including his friend Bruce. My Uncle always told Bruce to "smell the roses" or something like that, because Bruce pushed himself very hard.

In January of 2010, Bruce and his wife started to build on non-used land. This is when the miracle happened. When Bruce went into the house after the painters had left, he said out loud "Aram, I am going to stop and smell the roses", a radio which the workers had left, and which was not on, started to play "Queen". It was a miracle to me.

I believe with all my heart that even in heaven you can do extraordinary things.

This is dedicated to my Uncle and Godfather Aram.

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 – September 2010



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.