



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

NEWSLETTER



The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.

July – August 2020

© 2020 The Compassionate Friends, All rights Reserved Vol. 25 Issue 4

YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory. Our next two meetings will be on:

July 21st. & August 18th.

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month next to St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford at the parish center. ***Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last Monday or earlier if you plan to attend.***

Directions....On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at the Town Hall on the right take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church.
Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room.

July 28th. & August 25th.

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2020

Weather Cancellation

**In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:
Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239
 * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

Ed Motuzas 508/473/4239

Newsletter

Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/612-0259
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Mitchell Greenblatt 508/653-0541
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774
 Wendy Bruno 508/429-7998

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends
 Metrowest Chapter
 26 Simmons Dr.
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
 Dennis Gravelle
 638 Pleasant St.
 Leominster, MA 01453-6222
 Phone (978) 537-2736
dgtcf@aol.com

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends
 P.O. Box 3696
 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
 Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
 Fax (630) 990-0246

Web Page:
www.compassionatefriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, support our outreach program, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

THANK YOU to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

Love Gifts

Mrs Phyllis Murray in loving memory of her daughter **Kristin Cullinane** on her birthday June 27th. "Never forgotten, forever loved".

Mrs. Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter **Monica Michelle Curran** on her birthday May 21st.

Betty Myers in loving memory of her loving son **William Bruce Tagoe** on his anniversary July 6th. "Pieces of my heart are missing, I love and miss you".

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Marshell in loving memory of their son **Steven "Chip" Marshell** on his anniversary August 8th. and his birthday September 3rd.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC NEWS

We are still not sure when we will be meeting at our regular meetings in Holliston and in Milford. If you are not sure give us a call Joan or Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239. There are many Zoom-Casts. going on every week. If you have any interest in being part of this media you can reach out on my e-mail address. At headly@comcast.net. I could send you instruction, it's relatively easy.

AS far as our afternoon meetings we started to meet in the parking area of St Mary of the Assumption parking lot. *We bring our own chairs and masks*. We have a very flexible schedule, dates and times. Call me or e-mail me if you would like to attend





Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months, July and August. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

Anniversaries

July

WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
SCOTT F. MOTUZAS
BENJAMIN CROW
SHERIL SEARS JONES
DIXON BERGMAN

August

STEVEN "CHRIS" MARSELL
MATTHEW DENICE
LISA SOO KANE

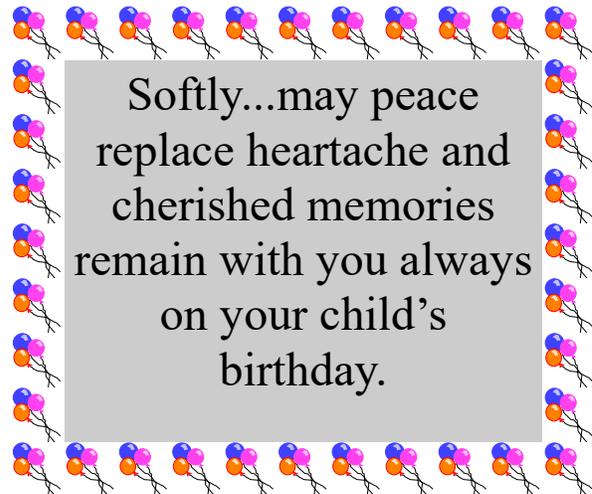
Birthdays

July

PATRICK WALKER EVENS
ROY RANDALL
ISAIAH MAURICE LUSSIER
CHRISTINA CASHELLE DISHMAN
MIRA TUTEJA
ELISSA DAON
CORINNE CECILIA SCIARAPPA
KAITLYN KENNEDY

August

ERICA BLEAKNEY
THERESA LAUREL SWINDELL
CHRISTOPHER J. LOUGHRAN
JAMIE BLAU
RICHARD PELLEGRINO
KEVIN HOLLAND
DAVID ALEXANDER SCHNEGG
CLIFFORD CROWE
GREG BRUNO
ADAM SCOTT COLE
JULIAN GEORGE CAYER



Softly...may peace
replace heartache and
cherished memories
remain with you always
on your child's
birthday.



THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

BROTHER

In my dreams he appeared to me, my beloved brother, to take me to our special place. To him I said, "I never thought we'd meet here again." He replied, "I am here."

Though in my grief, no tears were shed, for the peace and serenity that were now his, were bestowed upon me, to quiet my aching heart.

He took me to our lake, a place that was now forever suspended in time. We stood for a while, gazing out over the shimmering water, beneath a deep blue Heavenly sky.

Without words he spoke, "I am resting and you should not grieve for me. I am in peace and on my way to everlasting joy and happiness in the light of God. We will meet again one day." I knew to look at him that this was true, for he was no longer sick or suffering.

I sensed our time was almost over. To him I said, "I love you." He replied, "I'll always love you." With his last words still lingering on his beautiful face, he faded into the mist from our lake, to return to the hand of God.

Although I cannot see him now, I will always be able to return to our lake in my dreams, and never lose the memory of our final moments together...

*by Susan Drimam
TCF, Cape Cod
(in memory of her brother BILLY who died
by suicide July 24, 1991)*

LONELY HURTING CHILDREN

How is your Mom doing?
Is the basic question asked...
Sometimes an inquiry about Dad
But so sadly seldom
They do not ask the siblings...
They must be so sad.

True, the depth of our loss
Brings agony and pain.
But the children, the dear children
Really do hurt again and again.

They lost a brother or a sister,
Their pain is just as real...
Frustration, anger and fear
They too, go through such hell.

Who is there to comfort them,
To give a word of care?
Everyone is more concerned
About the parents' welfare.

While the siblings
Drown in their hurt and pain,
No one to hold them near.,
Let them know they are not to blame,
To uplift and ease
Their minds from fear.

*Linda Camper, a bereaved sibling
TCF, Colorado Springs, CO*



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



PROFESSIONALS WHAT WE'D LIKE THEM TO KNOW

I awoke suddenly and looked at the clock. I felt as though someone had shaken me. I struggled to get the fuzziness out of my mind. What day was it? What time was it? What's happening? As my eyes focused on the clock, I saw that it was 11:44 p.m. I quickly moved to the living room where my husband was sitting. I asked, "Isn't he home yet? Something must be wrong!"

Our 17 year-old son Nathan had not yet returned home from a high school basketball game. He was seldom late. He always called if he was delayed. The clock kept ticking away as we started making some phone calls. After an anxious hour of trying to find him, a friend whose daughter was in the same car as our Nate told us she had just received a call from a hospital. There had been a terrible head-on collision.

We started calling hospitals and we quickly located our Nathan. The hospital spokesperson said he was alive but unable to identify himself. Within a few minutes, we were standing at the nurses' desk in the Emergency Room of a large trauma center in our area. The rest of that night was a true nightmare. The nurse would not give us any information on Nate's condition, but insisted we fill out insurance forms. No one offered to let us see Nate, but we caught one fleeting glimpse of him as they rushed him to surgery. Finally a nurse came out to talk with us, and after much, much prodding from us, she admitted they did not expect Nathan to live.

We prayed, we called everyone we knew on the only pay phone in the ER that wasn't out of order, we prayed, we tried to ask questions, but got few answers, we prayed, we hugged each other, and we prayed some more. I was talking to a friend on the phone when I saw the head nurse come around the corner into the waiting room. She handed me a brown paper bag which held Nathan's brand new Nike's, and she said, "He's dead." I quickly found my husband and watched the light go out of his eyes as I told him our precious Nathan was gone.

Those memories of that fateful night are frozen in my mind. I have shared with thousands of bereaved parents, and unfortunately far too many of them have stories similar to ours. How should professionals react when a family is having to deal with the worst news they will ever hear?

Acknowledge the Family

I recently had the privilege of hearing Doug Manning speak. He stated that what we are looking for in the midst of a trauma is significance. We need to know that our relationship to the patient is acknowledged and that we don't have to relinquish our family position just because our loved one is in the hospital.

Two years ago, my father lay in ICU of a local hospital, very near death. I had never met any of the attending physicians, but when I met them that day, I was very quick to establish my significance as my father's next of kin. I let the doctors know my past experience with death and also that I write books on what doctors and hospitals do right and what they don't. (I've become bold in my old age!) Later that day as the doctor explained a medical procedure they were planning to perform on my father, I told the doctor I would consent to the procedure as long as I could be with my father during the test since it was quite possible he might die before the procedure was finished. As I stood in the room watching the doctors and nurses work feverishly to help my dad, one of the nurses said, "Perhaps you would be more comfortable out in the hall." I answered, "Perhaps you would be more comfortable if I were out in the hall, but I'm staying right here." Then we both laughed, but I stayed in the room.

Obviously, it will not always be possible or even wise for family members to be with a patient during all life-saving procedures. However, we need to be kept informed. A liaison should be assigned to the family, someone who can explain what's happening, someone who will represent the doctor and the family well. A liaison can also offer to call a pastor, chaplain, or friend. A liaison should also help provide privacy for the family, and most of all they need to be gentle. We have just been severely traumatized, our child has died or is dying, we are in a strange environment, and we are frightened. We need someone who will establish good rapport and establish our significance.

Answer Our Questions

We will have all kinds of questions. "Is he conscious? Is he in pain? What happened? What are the medical people doing right now? Why is it taking so long? Will he live?"

We need someone to explain the hospital procedures and answer our questions. A well-informed, caring staff person can go a long way toward preventing malpractice suits and at the very least promote goodwill between the hospital, the doctor, and the patient's family.

I have had the opportunity to talk with many families who have started malpractice suits. When I've asked them "Why did you decide to sue?" the answer invariably comes back, "We asked the doctor...the nurse...the hospital personnel...and they never answered our questions. When we get them to court, they will be forced to answer our questions and adequately explain what happened."

I have learned that families can handle an "I don't know" or "I did everything I could" answer much more easily than a medical person's refusal to answer or a medical person's apparent avoidance of the family.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 5)

When our questions aren't answered by medical personnel, we are left to coming up with our own answers and they may well be wrong.

When we walked in to the viewing room of the mortuary after our 17 year-old was killed by a drunk driver, our family doctor was waiting for us. He was not on duty the night Nathan died and had no personal involvement in his Emergency Room care. However, after offering his very sincere sympathy and expressing his own grief over Nathan's death, Dr. Maples stated, "I went to the trauma center and I read all about Nathan's injuries; what do you want to know?" Bless his heart! He answered all of our questions. I was so indebted to him that even though we moved to another town, it took me nearly eight years before I was able to transfer to another doctor. When I finally made that decision, I sent Dr. Maples a floral arrangement for his office and stated, "I can't justify driving to another town for medical care when there is a fine clinic just three blocks from me. But I want you to know we love you and will never forget you."

Accumulate Helpful Information

As medical professionals, don't become afraid of us and become evasive, just become knowledgeable. In a 1986 volume of *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* those who had experienced the death of a loved one listed the following behaviors as helpful:

Contact with a similar other: Medical facilities should be aware of volunteers from bereavement support groups who can be called to talk with and/or sit with a family facing the death of a loved one.

Expressions of Concern: Sometimes we are afraid to show sympathy for fear the family member may "fall apart." My thought is "So be it!" When we cry or show some other emotion, we are not doing so because you showed concern. We are doing so because someone has finally given significance to us and our situation and we feel it is safe to express our true feelings. The next behavior found helpful falls in natural order after *Expressions of Concern*.

Opportunity to Ventilate Feelings: It is helpful if someone shows enough concern that we know it is safe to express our feelings and our fears. Once we know it is ok to express our true feelings, the strong emotions usually dissipate quite quickly. However, when we sense it is not safe to show our emotions, we generally do everything we can to hold them in until some often insignificant situation arises and the top explodes off of our emotions like an exploding volcano.

Presence of Another Person: If a hospital can provide a caring person to stick with the family and even call and check up on them later, that will go a long way to create good will and positive attitudes between the family and the medical establishment.

Many years ago when our Nathan's identical twin, Ethan, died while still in the hospital ten days after birth, a very caring nurse came out into the hall, put her arms around my husband and me and cried with us. It has been thirty-three years since she stood there grieving with us. But I still remember her name. "Nurse Mathews, wherever you are, thank you for caring. Thank you for giving significance to our grief."

It is important that medical personnel become well versed in how to help families when things don't go the way they had hoped. Don't just read clinical material on bereavement; read articles and books written by bereaved people. I recently attended a conference for professional caregivers. I sat in on a workshop where the professionals were discussing how to help those who had lost a child. I listened for a while, was not happy with what I was hearing, and I finally asked, "How many of you have actually experienced the death of a child or other family member in an untimely death?" Not one person raised their hand. It would most definitely be my hope that none of the professionals reading this article would have to experience what I and thousands of others have experienced: the death of a precious child. However, it would be my hope that medical professionals would learn from us and ask us what they can do to help a bereaved family.



Allow Us To Grieve

Don't let us leave empty handed. Don't send us home with a pair of Nike's in a brown paper bag. Gather information on support groups. Prepare a resource list of helpful books and articles. Place it in our hands. Give us a card with the telephone number of a chaplain or counselor. Send us home with some books that will address our situation. Have someone check on us periodically. I recently had a medical professional say to me, "Well, what kind of time-line can we put on grief?" My answer is, "Grief takes as long as it takes." Give us time, and give us permission to grieve.

Marilyn Heavilin, a popular speaker and workshop presenter, draws from her grief experiences following the deaths of three of her children, Jimmy, Ethan, and Nathan. She has authored several books including December's Song and When Your Dreams Die. Her first book Roses in December has been recently updated. Marilyn will be presenting workshops at the 1999 Portland National Conference.

**Marilyn Willett Heavilin
In Memory of Jimmy, Ethan and Nathan**



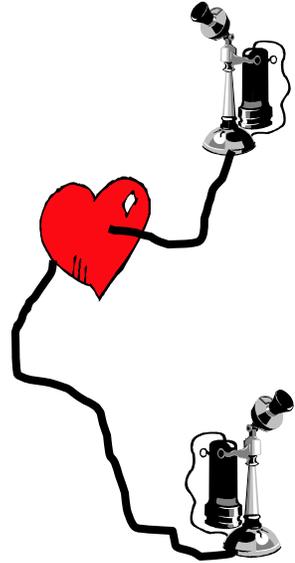
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

Ed & Joan Motuzas,**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942
Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)366-2085
Mitchell Greenblatt,.....**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
Sandra Richiazzi-Natoli,....**Bryan**, age 17, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106
Sarah Commerford,.....**Timothy**, age 21, Homicide.....(508)429-9230



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

Support Resources

TCF Online Chat Groups:

WWW.compassionatefriends.org/resources/online_Support.aspx

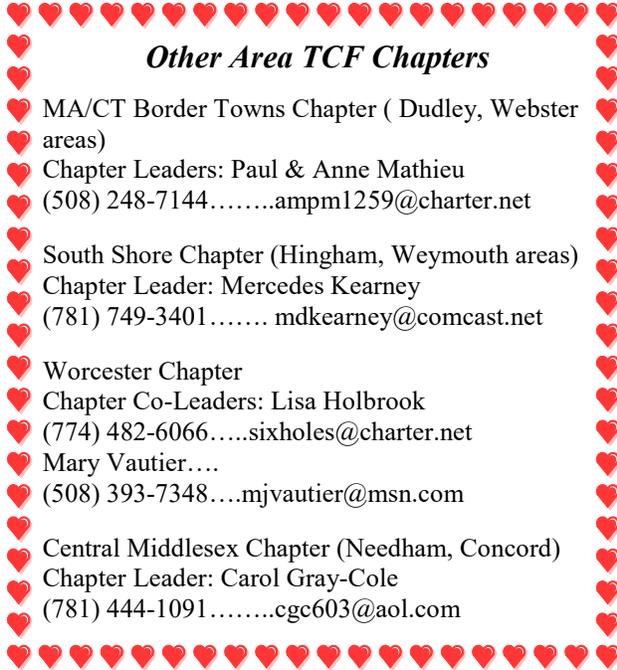
- For questions, please contact Diana Jorden, 925-432-3854, who moderates the general grief and suicide loss rooms on Friday nights and Sunday. TCF online offers several specialized chat rooms, all moderated by moms who have been in chat for at least 2 years or more. We offer a sibling-only chat, loss under 1 year, loss over 2 years, loss of only child, suicide survivor, infant/pregnancy loss, and every night (and Monday mornings) there is a general loss room open to parents, step and grand, and siblings.
- You can sign up for the online TCF National newsletter at www.compassionatefriends.org
- You can reach our TCF National Facebook page through the link on the same home page of our national website. You will be asked to join Facebook if you are not already a member, and we hope you'll find our Facebook page as interesting as do the more than 11,000 fans who have already found us!

Other Grief Support Websites

- agast.org - for grandparents
- alivealone.org
- aliveinmemory.org
- angelmoms.com
- babysteps.com
- bereavedparentsusa.org
- beyondindigo.com
- childloss.com
- goodgriefresources.com
- parmenter.org - children's bereavement
- griefhealingblog.com
- griefwatch.com
- GriefNet.org
- healingafterloss.org
- Jeff's Place-www.jeffsplacemetrowest.org
- opentohope.com
- pomc.com - families of murder victims
- save.org
- survivorsofsuicide.com
- Taps.org - military death
- webhealing.com
- Griefshare.org



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Other Area TCF Chapters

- MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)
Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu
(508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net
- South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)
Chapter Leader: Mercedes Kearney
(781) 749-3401.....mdkearney@comcast.net
- Worcester Chapter
Chapter Co-Leaders: Lisa Holbrook
(774) 482-6066.....sixholes@charter.net
Mary Vautier....
(508) 393-7348.....mjvautier@msn.com
- Central Middlesex Chapter (Needham, Concord)
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole
(781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com

WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR

Every time I am in a group of bereaved parents, I hear people say things like, "I wish my child hadn't died" or "I wish I had him back." Those wishes, unfortunately, can never come true. Another wish I hear is "I wish my friends (or church, or neighbors, or relatives) understood what I am going through and were more supportive." This is a wish that has some possibility of coming true if we are able to be honest and assertive with the people around us. What do we wish others understood about the loss of our child? Here is a partial list of such wishes:

- 1 I wish you would not be afraid to speak my child's name. My child lived and was important.
- 2 If I cry or get emotional if we talk about my child, I wish you knew that it isn't because you have hurt me; the fact that my child died has caused my tears. You have allowed me to cry and thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing.
- 3 I wish you wouldn't "kill" my child again by removing from your home his pictures, artwork, or other remembrances.
- 4 I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good day my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.
- 5 I wish you knew that the death of a child is different from other losses and must be viewed separately. It is the ultimate tragedy and I wish you wouldn't compare it to your loss of a parent, a spouse, or a pet.

- 6 Being a bereaved parent is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't shy away from me.
 - 7 I wish you knew all of the "crazy" grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, frustration, hopelessness, and the questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following the death of a child.
 - 8 I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in six months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for us. As with alcoholics, I will never be "cured" or a "former bereaved parent," but will forevermore be a "recovering bereaved parent."
 - 9 I wish you understood the physical reactions to grief. I may gain weight or lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident-prone, all of which may be related to my grief.
 - 10 Our child's birthday, the anniversary of his death, and holidays are a terrible times for us. I wish you would tell us that you are thinking about our child on these days, and if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about our child and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.
 - 11 It is normal and good that most of us re-examine our faith, values, and beliefs after losing a child. We will question things we have been taught all our lives and hopefully come to some new understanding with our God. I wish you would let me tangle with my religion without making me feel guilty.
 - 12...I wish you wouldn't offer me drinks or drugs. These are just temporary crutches, and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.
 - 13 I wish you understood that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my child died and I never will be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self," you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know the new me - - maybe you'll still like me.
- Instead of sitting around and waiting for our wishes to come true, we have an obligation to teach people some of the things we have learned about our grief. We can teach these lessons with great kindness, believing that people have good intentions and want to do what is right, but just don't know what to do with us, or we can sit and wait, I believe our children would want us to help the world understand.



*Elaine Grier
TCF, Atlanta, GA*



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEWSLETTER MAILING LIST UPDATE (THIS PAGE WILL BE PRINTED EVERY OTHER EDITION)

We continue to update our mailing list. We want everyone who reads our newsletter to receive it; however, mailing costs make this update necessary. We want to send it where it is being read. Your donations allow us to print and mail this newsletter and to reach out to hundreds of parents and siblings.

Please fill out this form now if you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list. This form should be filled out annually. If we don't hear from you in a year's time you will be notified through the newsletter that your name will be removed from our mailing list unless we hear from you.

If you are able to make a donation at this time, it will be gratefully received. Please mail to address below.

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

I (do___) (do not___) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

(Donation included___) Make checks payable to "The Compassionate Friends" or TCF

If there are any errors in spelling or other information in this newsletter, please call it to my attention so that I may correct it. Please use this page to send back information, reverse side is addressed for your convenience.

Mail to: TCF Metrowest, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

PLEASE ADVISE US OF ADDRESS CHANGES TO INSURE YOUR RECEIVING THE NEWSLETTER, THEY ARE NOT FORWARDED BY THE POST OFFICE.

Fold & Tape

The Compassionate Friends
Metrowest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Milford MA 01757-1265

Fold & Tape



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process. Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)
Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)
Rick Dugan (Larry's Dad)
Janice Parmenter Sub. (Tyler's Mom)
Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)

A Visitor

Yesterday, an out of town acquaintance stopped by. We could easily be friends, if days were longer and our lives not so complicated. After small talk pleasantries, he grew silent and pensive. I knew then this was more than a social call. It was apparent his pain was deep, and he was struggling to start what would be a difficult conversation. He looked up from his lap, and he told me I was the first person he has talked to about this because he knew I would understand.

He spoke of his daughter who had recently attempted suicide, the details of which are unimportant here. His eyes welled up, and he unsuccessfully fought their overflowing. His lip trembled, and as I handed him a tissue, he asked me what he did wrong. He asked me how he could have missed his daughter's significant suffering. It is so apparent he loves his daughter unconditionally and supports her emotionally, academically, and socially. And yet, he feels as though he somehow let her down, causing her to take this drastic step.

As I looked at him through my own tears, I saw myself eleven months ago. In his voice, I heard my own asking those same questions. And just as I was told by so many, "It is not your fault," I know those words sounded hollow when I spoke them to him.

We carefully choose our children's school districts, teachers, classes, and extracurricular activities, to develop our children into caring, successful, intelligent beings. We monitor their media intake and their friendships. We provide quality family time to be sure we stay connected. We have those important and difficult conversations to help prepare them for adulthood. And yet, even if we do everything as "right" as we possibly can, something we can't yet understand happens in some of our children, leading them into a spiraling darkness, unable to ask even those who love them the most for help. And so many do such a good job of hiding their symptoms, we are unaware of their pain while sitting right beside it.

Through tears, my visitor asked me what happens next. The most painful part of the conversation was explaining his journey will likely be harder than mine, because Tom was successful on his first attempt, so my journey with my son is over. But his daughter survived her attempt, so his journey is just beginning. Just as he cannot imagine my pain, I cannot imagine his.

Kimberly Starr
TCF, Facebook Loss to Suicide Group
In Memory of my son Tom

Walking the Lonesome Valley

One of my favorite gospel songs is "You've Got to Walk That Lonesome Valley" which is attributed to various composers in the early 20th Century. Many adaptations have been made to the words, yet all seem to fit.

This gospel song is particularly poignant for bereaved parents. We must take our grief journey alone. We must take our grief journey on our own terms and in our own way. I found myself humming and then singing this gospel song after my son died over nine years ago.

I was never really alone in this lonesome valley, however; many are taking this same walk, in their own ways and on their own terms. In TCF, we learn from other parents who walk the lonesome valley. We receive hope from those who take this journey with us. Some bereaved parents choose to return to the darkest places in the lonesome valley and help our newly bereaved parents as they define their own personal journey. Gradually, after thousands of steps, the bereaved parent comes to the place of resolution and emerges from the valley into the gauzy sunlight of hope and peace.

Reach out for assuring words and thoughts and ideas and hope. Take comfort in knowing that each of us is walking the lonesome valley.

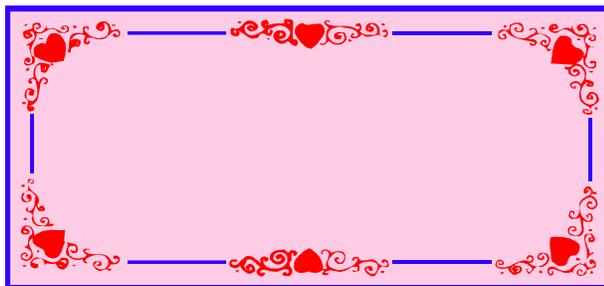
You've got to walk that lonesome valley
 You've got to walk it by your self
 There's no one here can walk it for you
 You've got to walk it by yourself

I must walk this lonesome valley,
 I have to walk it by myself,
 Oh, nobody else can walk it for me,
 I have to walk it by myself.

I must go and stand my trial,
 I have to stand it by myself,
 O, nobody else can stand it for me,
 I have to stand it by myself.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
TCF, Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen

The Compassionate Friends
Metrowest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Milford, MA 01757-1265



*This newsletter is printed
through the generosity of
The Copy Stop &
Minuteman Printing.
Milford, MA.*

Address Correction Requested

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. 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 said that will help you in your grief work.



TO OUR OLD MEMBERS

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK...** what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”*