



# 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.

May - June 2010

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### 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: **May 18th June 15th**

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 Tedeschi's Market on the left, 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. Our next two meetings will be on:

**May 25th June 29th**

### 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. ©2010

### 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
<b>Steering Committee *</b>	
Judy Daubney	508/529-6942
Janice Parmenter	508/528-5715
Linda Teres	508/620-0613
Carmela Bergman	508/359-8902
Mitchell Greenblatt	508/881-2111
Judith Cherrington	508/473-4087

The chapter address is:

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

### Regional Coordinator

Rick Mirabile  
11 Ridgewood Crossing  
Hingham, MA 02043  
Phone (781) 740-1135  
Email: Rmirabile@comcast.net

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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**Chapter Web Page**  
[www.tcfmetrowest.com](http://www.tcfmetrowest.com)

## 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, 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. Susan Sannicandro in loving memory of her son **Frank W. Topham**.

Robert Hudson in loving memory of his sisters **Rita Hudson-Carney**, and **Beatrice Elizabeth Hudson** on her anniversary May 8th.

Mrs. Beverly Marks in loving memory of her son **Shawn P. Marks** on his anniversary February 15th.

Mr. & Mrs. George Swymer in loving memory of their daughters **Karen Swymer-Shanahan** and **Laura Swymer-Clancy**.

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Murphy in loving memory of their beloved son **Michael Patrick Murphy** on his birthday May 17th and his anniversary May 31st.

Mrs. Edithmarie Siebert in loving memory of her beautiful daughter **Lea M. Siebert**.

### Other Area TCF Chapters

MA/CT Border Towns Chapter  
Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu  
(508) 248-7144.....ampm1259@charter.net

South Shore Chapter.  
Chapter Leaders: Rob Tyrrell  
(781) 883-6599.....robtyrrell@comcast.net  
Martha Berman  
(781) 337-8649.....mmartha1@comcast.net

Worcester Chapter  
Chapter Leader: Linda Schafer  
(508) 393-4448.....capecodlinda23@verizon.net

Central Middlesex Chapter  
Chapter Leader: Carol Gray-Cole  
(781) 444-1091.....cgc603@aol.com



# 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 of May and June. 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*

### *May*

COREY S. VAUTIER  
BEATRICE ELIZABETH HUDSON  
DAVID JOSHUA FLEET  
SHAUN LAMPILA  
JORDANA L. CASSIDY  
LEA M. SIEBERT  
MICHAEL WEINSTOCK  
JOSEPH A. McCLOY  
ROBERT F. DUMONT JR.  
DOLORES R. BERGERON  
MICHAEL MURPHY

### *June*

DAVID PASQUANTONIO  
MATTHEW PISAPIA  
MICHAEL HEARNS  
RICHARD G. CAPADAIS  
RUSSELL J. TERES  
LAURIE SLOPEK  
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI  
IAN GREENBLATT

## *Birthdays*

### *May*

DAVID JOSHUA FLEET  
BRUCE F. BENNETT  
MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI  
ELIZABETH MARTIN  
SHAUN LAMPILA  
MICHAEL MURPHY  
BRIAN PATRICK MARKEE  
DOUGLAS C. CURTISS  
BRYAN SCOT LAVOIE  
CINDY CABRAL-BEATSON  
CHARLES PHILLIPS

### *June*

DONNA ANN WOLFSON  
CHARLES E. PATTON  
SCOTT MOTUZAS  
DAVID PASQUANTONIO  
JUSTIN MAYER  
STEVEN GRILLO  
LAURIE J. LANDERS



**CHAPTER TID-BITS**

Al Kennedy has graciously volunteered to make up picture buttons of our loved ones. The buttons are 2 1/4 inch diameter. If you have a photo of your child, you can e-mail it as an attachment to [aksound@comcast.net](mailto:aksound@comcast.net) or bring it to the next meeting. Al has a tool that will cut out the 2 1/4 inch diameter picture to fit it in the button. The circle is an approx. diameter of the button. A special thanks to **Al Kennedy.**





## The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest



# 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.

### *A Journey to the "New Normal"*

May 31 marked seven years since my only sibling Dave died from cancer at age 32. This June 28 we would have been celebrating Dave's 40th birthday with a big party, and I'd be kidding him about going bald, just like all the Snapp men before him. Instead, I'll be getting ready for the TCF National Conference, at which I'll share memories of his brilliance, great smile, and sense of humor with those who will never have the pleasure of meeting him in person.

At this point in my grief journey, most will be good memories of how Dave lived, rather than bad memories of how he died. I can't recall the moment when that shift of perspective occurred, but I would like to share a few memories and milestones that have marked the way:

- Months after Dave died, I went to see the movie "Big", starring Tom Hanks, and "lost it" when his mother stared out the window wondering if she'd ever see him again. I watched the movie again recently and didn't lose it.
- It was three months before I felt up to sharing with anyone the details of the day my brother died at his home in Bellevue, Washington, in the company of Mom, Dad, and me. On the way home from that emotional conversation, I drove the wrong way down a one way street in downtown Chicago, it might be smart to have a friend drive you to your first few TCF meetings!
- I discovered that the grief path is not a straight line. A few good days can be followed by several bad ones. I've heard other TCF members call this their "roller coaster ride."
- For a year, I couldn't keep the radio on if "Wind Beneath My Wings" came on. For the next year, I kept it on but cried through it. Now, I can usually make it all the way through without any tears!

- With the help of TCF, I realized that despite friends expecting it to be possible, I'd never be "back to normal". My focus instead shifted to finding my "new normal". While I can't point to a time when that happened (probably after the 1990 TCF Conference), that was a milestone.
- For three Christmases after Dave died, I didn't put up a tree in my condo. For Christmas, 1991, as I was getting out ornaments for my first tree since his death, I came across a bunch of ornaments that he had had in his apartment. I came totally unglued then, but now I look forward to seeing those ornaments each Christmas.
- It was three years before I felt that I had enough emotional energy to pursue a relationship. Even now, I don't have a lot of tolerance for guys I go out with that gripe about their brothers or sisters.

My most vivid "landmark" to date along my grief journey came in February 1993. Following my Dad's father's death in December, 1992, we were in Atlanta cleaning out my grandfather's apartment, and I came across a pile of post cards and letters that Dave had written to my grandparents through the years. Earlier in my journey, a "blind side" such as that would have sent me into a tailspin. In this case, though, my immediate reaction was one of happiness, for I had found a part of Dave that I didn't know I still had! I saved a few of the post cards, sent a couple to my cousin who was referenced in some of the letters, and (amazingly) threw the rest away. It was fun to share the memories, but I didn't feel the need to hang onto them. It was at that point, nearly five years after Dave's death, that I truly felt as if I was closing in on that "new normal".

**Karen Snapp**  
**Frisco, Texas**  
*from the TCF Stages Newsletter*



# *The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest*



## *River Reflections*

I just got back from a river rafting trip, where I found myself thinking about my brother a lot. He died 16 months ago of an overdose of morphine. I don't know why it happened; it happened. I didn't see the beginning of his life, he was three years older, but I saw the end. I can look at it now and see it in its entirety, his 33 years of living that I so much counted on and expected to last another 70 or 80 years. I thought I would always have him to talk to, about life, about family, and about ourselves. The river was a meditative place for me. The rhythm of the oars, the gentle motion of the raft, the shore gliding by, the gurgle of the water as it seeped into and back out of our raft, all of this provided just enough stimulation and was hypnotic enough that I didn't want to do anything but sit and think. For a few days on the river, I floated without any of my day-to-day concerns, without the usual level of tension standing behind me.

What rose to the surface, visible in the clear water of my mind after the silt of all my worries sank to the bottom, were thoughts of my brother. Nat would have liked this trip. The rough beauty of the terrain and the quiet power of the water would not have been lost on him. He would have noticed the beauty of the full moon and the light on the canyon walls as the sun rose and set. I have felt a lot of anger at him for dying, for taking his own life, for engaging in an activity so dangerous, for playing Russian roulette, for committing suicide. He left no note, he didn't say good-bye; he left a wife and two sons whom he loved very much but who, like me, were not enough to keep him alive. It wasn't the anger, though, that I felt on the river. I just remembered him. Grief is at its sharpest when, after a death, he all of a sudden flashes into focus so real and so present that I can hear his voice as if he has just spoken to me. I can imagine the scent of his hair, remember the texture of his face as I touch it, and I can see him walking and talking as if he were only there a moment ago. At these times, the grief flares up; the wound feels fresh and sharp with memories of the love, the charm, and the grace. I realize both with gratitude and with anguish for the wound this reality carries, that he is not someone I can let go.

These memories will come to me for the rest of my life. He is truly a part of me. He is mixed up in my blood and my bones and the electrical impulses of my brain. And in whatever way all of these things go together to form a soul, he is a part of that too. There is no escaping him. This is the gift and the price of love--it doesn't end.



My brother was there in the river's sand and mud, in the full moon, the constantly flowing cold water, the clear dry air, the red canyon walls, and the blue sky. And he was there in me. And I was there, alive and more appreciative than I would have been before he died. I was more aware of my connection to my surroundings, that one day my body will be river mud, water, and bones like driftwood. What form my love will take then, I don't know. Maybe if there is a river and desert light offering delight to someone's senses, that will be enough. I don't know.

*Emily Moore  
TCF, Los Angeles, CA*

## *A Father's Attitude*

My son began learning how to be a father when I married my husband. Once it was just the two of us, Todd and me. Then it was the three of us. Todd, John and me. The dynamics shifted, yet they strengthened for each of us. My husband took Todd on special trips, skiing in Colorado, fishing in Canada, deep sea fishing in the Gulf. But he also gave him time. Together they worked on building our new home. Todd learned how to use a hammer, a saw and a screwdriver at the age of 10. John and Todd spent thousands of hours working on cars together and going to car shows.

But most importantly, John taught Todd what a father is. Once, when Todd's son was complaining about how unfair life was, Todd sat back and talked with him. "Some people's glasses are half full, some are half empty, but Buddy, your glass is always bone dry. Why is that?" No answer was forthcoming. So Todd explained to him that it was all in attitude. "Look at your Papa John. Each day he wakes up happy. He doesn't complain. He does what he has to do, and he always has something positive to say to everyone. Life isn't always easy for him. He just makes it look that way. It's an attitude, Bud. You need to learn that life will be tough sometimes. Other times it will be good. Life is how you perceive it. That's one of the most important lessons your Papa John taught me. Think about it."

Now, John and I are facing the fifth Father's Day since Todd died. I always get him a card and let him know that he was a great father whose contribution enriched my son's life very deeply. John gave of himself.





## *The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest*



. He brightened Todd's days, broadened his horizons and tempered his attitude. Todd learned that men do cry, that women need to be told that they are loved and that children are a wonderful gift. So, once again this year, I will thank John for bringing so much dimension and pure love into my beautiful son's life and remind him that little boys become good fathers because of their role models and that life is truly about attitude.

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

### *A MOTHER'S TOUCH*

My husband Jeff grew up in a family of hugging, kissing, foot-rubbing, back scratchers. Affectionate folks! In my family, on the other hand, we only scratched mosquito bites, and certainly not each other's. Although we loved one another fiercely, we weren't very demonstrative. A wink, a squeeze, a peck on the cheek, a poke in the ribs, that was mushy stuff for us. Touching another person was not something that came easily to me; that is, until my first child was born.

When the nurse placed that chubby cherub in my arms, the floodgates of my heart opened, and a torrent of overwhelming love poured out. I couldn't keep my hands off the little dumpling! I reamed first-hand what it means to "smother with kisses." Caressing my precious baby came as naturally as breathing.

Other children came along, and I was reborn a certified, card-carrying cuddler. I learned how many of a mother's day-to-day interactions with her children require her touch. Touching became a way of life for me as I fed, bathed, dressed, tamed cowlicks, and kissed ouchies.

It's funny, but one of the things I missed most after my son Blake died was tying his shoes. When he was alive, that chore was the bane of my existence. Blake's shoes were perpetually untied or hopelessly tangled in knots that would have defied Houdini himself. I rejoiced when the shoe designers came up with Velcro closures, seeing an end to my nemesis. But would Blake wear those simple, convenient shoes? No way! Big boys wore shoes with laces, and most of all, he wanted to be like the big boys. So I armed my teeth, and kept tying and bending every fork in the house de-knotting. After Blake died, how my fingers ached to tie those little shoes one more time!

For most bereaved mothers I know, not being able to touch, to hold, to embrace our child is the most painful reality we have to face. The emptiness of our arms, the indescribable longing to have those arms filled again with our precious child, are almost more than we can bear.

At first, when our grief is fresh, it may be hard, for us to touch anyone. We may close ourselves off emotionally, willing to touch or be touched, or to run the risk of being hurt so badly again. But mothers are touches! With time, when the pain isn't so intense, we may want to reach out once more.

None of us ever outgrows the need to be touched, no matter how old we are. And what can be so comforting as a mother's touch! Today, if you can, touch someone. Do it in the memory of your beloved child.

*Patricia Dyson  
TCF, Beaumont, TX*

### *Summer Thoughts*

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches, everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!" I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this summer would not be an eternity; I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like working in my garden, and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

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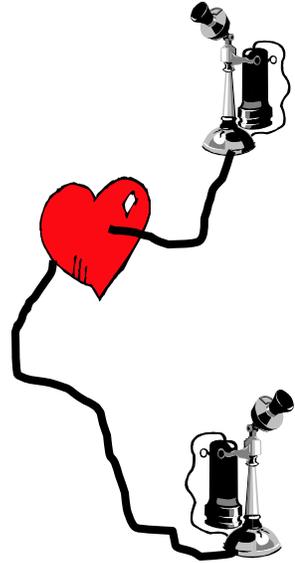
# The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest



## 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)620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Judith Cherrington,...**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer, .....(508)473-4087
- Gloria Rabinowitz.....**Gianna Rose Therese**, Still Born.....(774)287-6497
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan C. Plunkett**, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106



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.

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## Thoughts about Mother's Day

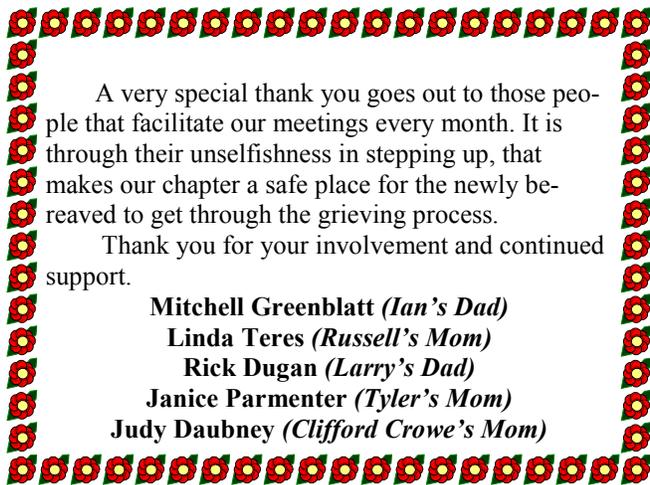
I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel this way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

**Libby Gonzalez**  
*TCF, Huntsville, AL*

As I think about Mother's Day this year I become very nostalgic. Every spring during my elementary school days, I looked forward to the day the order form for our plants for Mother's Day came from our local florist. I always ordered pansies for my mom, the ones with purple and yellow or yellow and brown. I could hardly wait for the delivery day to come, so that I could present them to my mother. She always received them with much surprise and appreciation, as if it were a gift she had never received before or even expected.

As a child, Mother's Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one's mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, then drive to a nearby city for lunch. I remember clearly my first Mother's Day being "the mom." Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be "the mom." But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother's Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards.



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** (*Tyler's Mom*)

**Judy Daubney** (*Clifford Crowe's Mom*)



## *The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest*



As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

Then the unthinkable happened. Our daughter, Anna, died. How could those special days of love and togetherness, laughter and fun become among the most dreaded days a mother must face? How could those days that we had once anticipated with joy and excitement bring such unbelievable heartache and confusion, loneliness and tears?

During those first few years we were simply lost. This was new, undesired, and certainly not requested, territory that we had been forced to enter. What were we supposed to do? How were we supposed to act? I just wanted to run away or stay in bed with the sheets over my head. The traditions we had come to love and enjoy became intensely painful. It became an impossible task to attend church services or go out for brunch. Seeing families enjoying their togetherness pierced my heart with an endless ache. My tear-filled eyes burned at the thought of being surrounded by "intact" families. Feelings of anger and resentment overwhelmed my heart. On the inside I wanted to lash out at all those mothers and fathers who were surrounded by all of their children and those sisters and brothers who had no clue what it would be like to lose a sibling. As the day drew to a close I felt tremendous relief that it was over. Exhausted, I would lay silently with my head on my pillow as quiet tears lulled me to sleep.

The feelings that I have shared are not uncommon in the early years of grief with those who have experienced the death of a child, grandchild or sibling. If you or someone you care about has experienced the death of a child, I offer some suggestions from those who have been there to help you to make it through this time.

- Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.
- Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in "survival mode." Trying to please everyone else can cause undo stress.
- If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.
- Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.
- Visit the cemetery.
- You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother's Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother's Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother's Day.

- Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.
- Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle. Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

As with all holidays, be reassured that what you do this year does not have to be what you do next year. As my Compassionate Friends and I have found, with proper grief work over time, the intensity of our feelings has softened. This will happen for you, as well. In the meantime, be gentle with yourself. And remember, "you need not walk alone."

***Paula Funk  
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter  
Petoskey, MI***

### ***Ideas for Writing Your Story or Journal***

Recently, several new TCF members have asked me for suggestions about what they can do at the early stages of grief and what helped me in my experience in those earlier days of grief when my son, Bobby, died. In thinking about that, I remember my journal and what a meaningful and effective way of venting that was for me. As you may know, very often our close friends think we should be "moving on with life" or "letting go," etc. Unfortunately, for me, they just didn't get it. So, I looked back through some past newsletter issues and found an article on ideas for writing your story or journal, I hope you find it helpful:

Bereaved parents who have written about their loss unanimously agree that writing unleashes enormous stress and pain. In my own experience, I recall one night when I locked myself in the bathroom and wrote a long letter to my son, Bobby. It was my chance to express my feelings without having them diminished by well meaning and caring people around me trying to be helpful. I will never forget the pressure that letter released for me. Although the letter was not saved, the positive result was everlasting.

Have you ever thought of writing your story or keeping a journal? You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your child by recording your feelings in the form of a letter. Write a letter to your child, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following:

- A special memory that I have about you.*
- What I miss the most about you and our relationship.*
- What I wish I'd said or hadn't said.*
- What I'd like to ask you.*
- What I wish we'd done or hadn't done.*

(continued on page 11)



# 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

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

Fold & Tape

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# *The Compassionate Friends of Metrowest*



(continued from page 8)

## *Mind Games*

*What I've had the hardest time dealing with.  
Ways in which you will continue to live on in me.  
Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you  
alive.*

Choose one or several ideas that have significance for you or start at the top of the list and work your way down. These topics may serve to help you come up with your own ideas, specific to your situation and relationship. Give yourself this exercise as a gift. If you would like to share your writing at a TCF meeting, please do. You never know how many other parents will be touched and benefit from your experience.

*by Pat Akery, Chapter Leader,  
TCF, Medford, OR*

### **THINGS TO DO WHEN DESPERATE**

1. Breathe.
2. Get my teddy bear.
3. Call other bereaved people (keep their phone numbers easily available)
4. Call close friends (keep their phone numbers easily available, too.)
5. Call a counselor.
6. Call a hot-line.
7. Get in my rocking chair. Get in any chair and let it support me.
8. Take a hot bath.
9. Run around the block three times.
10. Listen to soothing music.
11. Put on a relaxation tape.
12. Ask someone to hold me.
13. Cry.
14. Yell into my pillow.
15. Join a support group.
16. Say to myself, "Others love me," or, "I have the right to survive," or, "Others have gotten through this, I can too."
17. Stroke the dog or cat.
18. Watch an old movie on TV or read a book.
19. Hug a tree.
20. Stand or lie on the floor and feel the floor support me.
21. Pray.
22. Start again at the top.

*edited by Anne Pieper,  
from The Courage to Heal,  
by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis*

Mind Games, it can happen anywhere, anytime. Driving along the highway, I think: just suppose I turn my head quickly, will you suddenly be sitting next to me? Will you be humming along to a song that was a particular favorite of yours? I swear I can hear you. I want so much to hear you singing loudly and a bit off key again.

Or perhaps I'm in the supermarket and I see someone with long, blond hair, is it you? My heart thumps. I want so badly for it to be you. People glance at me strangely and I realize I'm standing in the middle of the aisle weeping. Even the special foods you loved can reduce me to tears. I'm tempted to buy your favorites and prepare them for when you come home for supper.

At night when I climb into bed, I scrunch over toward the middle, this gives you room to sit next to me the way you would after coming home from a late date. My senses are alive with you. I can smell your special perfume and feel your long, slender fingers with the pearl ring Daddy gave you for graduation. I can hear your laughter. You will stay with me until I fall asleep.

Then there are the times when I consciously call out your name in the silence of the house. My mind knows there will be no response, but in my heart I hear you answer me and for that split moment you are there at the top of the stairs as surely as I am at the bottom. Barbara...Barbara...Barbara... Your name is a litany.

I suppose that behavior could be considered quite strange. What does one make of it? Weeping in supermarkets, calling to one who is not there. Oh, but in that fraction of a second when one feels one's loved one close, that feeling, although bittersweet, soothes and comforts a splintered heart.

Mind games...it can happen anywhere, anytime.

*Bunny Placco  
TCF, Greater Providence Chapter, RI*

### *Normal Day*

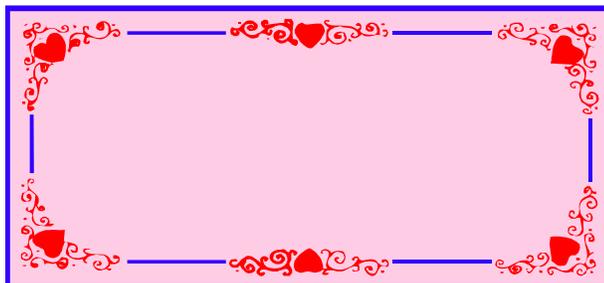
Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you before you depart.

Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow. Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.

One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow, or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky, and want more than all the world for your return.

*by Mary Jean Irion*

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Milford, MA 01757-1265



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**TCF National Conference**  
**July 2-4, Arlington, Virginia**



“Reflections of Love, Visions of Hope” is the theme for this year’s **TCF National Conference** — an event unlike any other! Bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents are able to share with others walking the same grief journey, with well-known speakers, entertainment, and more than 100 workshops on most topics of grief following the death of a child. And join us for our 4th of July **Walk to Remember** or sponsor a walker in remembrance of your loved ones! (*You don’t have to attend the conference to participate*).

While you’re in the area, visit other nearby attractions or catch the world-class display of 4th of July fireworks over the National Mall. Hyatt Regency Crystal City is hosting our conference. (Be sure to ask for TCF conference rates; 1-800-233-1234 or <http://www.crystalcity.hyatt.com>.)

**Learn more, Sign up to Attend, or Find out how you can help.**

For more information, contact your local chapter or visit:

**[WWW.compassionatefriends.org](http://WWW.compassionatefriends.org)**