



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 2015



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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 19th June 16th

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford parish center at 17 Winter St. **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 26th June 30th

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. ©2015

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

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* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

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 Linda Teres 508/620-0613
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The chapter address is:

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

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
 Tom Morse
 66 Atwood Avenue
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 Phone (508) 572-3038
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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, 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

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldridge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldridge** on his anniversary March 24th.

Viola Paulhus & Helen Homenick in loving memory of their son and grandson **Michael J. Paulhus** on his birthday February 28th and his anniversary March 28th. "Mike we miss you so very much."

Mrs. Janet Raneri in loving memory of her son **Major Rob Raneri** on his birthday May 5th and his anniversary June 26th. "Miss you so much, Mom."

Mrs. Carmela Bergman in loving memory of her beloved **Dixon Bergman**.

Mr. & Mrs. Burton Stuchins in loving memory of their son **Alan Richard Stuchins** on his birthday March 2nd.





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

- LAUREN THIBEAU FLANAGAN
- IAN MacINNES HODGMAN
- BETSY CHICK-GRANT
- COREY S. VAUTIER
- LEA M. SIEBERT
- SUSAN A. QUINLIVAN
- LISA RANDALL
- ROBERT L. LOMBARD Jr.
- DOLORES ROSE BERGERON
- MICHAEL PATRICK MURPHY

June

- DANIEL R. ADILETTO
- CHRISTOPHER MARC DULLEO
- MATTHEW PISAPIA
- CHARLES M. CLARKE Jr.
- RUSSELL J. TERES
- LAURIE SLOPEK
- MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
- IAN GREENBLATT

Birthdays

May

- JENNIFER L. GOLDSWORTHY
- MICHAEL P. McLAUGHLIN
- MAJ. ROBERT M. RANERI
- MICHAEL PATRICK MURPHY
- WILLIAM C. LEWIS
- MARC P. LEWIS
- ANTHONY V. BOTTCHER
- KRISTEN DONOVAN

June

- DONNA ANN WOLFSON
- ERIC L. BOTTCHER
- SCOTT MOTUZAS
- JUSTIN MAYER
- STEVEN GRILLO
- NICHOLAS L. BOUDREAU

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Go Green



Green goes with everything

To our wonderful e-mail subscribers, Thank You! By receiving your newsletter in this format, you are saving trees (to make paper), chemicals (to produce ink), money (for postage), and waste products from printing and from newsletters that are only printed if you need the hard copy. Our chapter and the world appreciates your generosity.



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.

THE AFTERMATH OF SUICIDE

I had never experienced the death of a close loved one before my brother died. When David died, my world came crashing down around me, shattering me into a million pieces. My brother and I were close, but I had no suspicion that he was contemplating suicide and had been for a long time. The night my sister called to tell me he was dead is etched in my memory forever. If I shut my eyes, I can go back to that time and place almost three years ago and still hear her voice. It is a very painful memory and one that I don't call up, but it is there nonetheless.

The overwhelming feelings of shock, disbelief, numbness, despair, and sadness are very vivid. At the same time, I was outraged at what he had done to us, to me. How dare he do this! I couldn't even begin to guess how many times I said, "I can't believe this is happening."

The first six months was a confusing and emotionally draining period for me. I was obsessed with wanting to have answers, especially from him. I read many books on suicide and finally after reading Iris Bolton's book "My Son, My Son," I came to realize what she said was true: "You can ask why a million times but you finally have to let it go, because the person you need the answers from is not here to give them to you. If only for the sake of your own sanity, you have to stop asking why."

Our family drew closer together from this tragedy, and it made me more aware of how much I value and love them. I also had the support of a good friend who was willing to spend hours talking and crying with me. I still get very angry at my brother for changing our lives so irrevocably. That anger inevitably turns into sadness.

I cannot see his smiling face, or hear his laughter, or watch him grow into adulthood. Yes, I had dreams for him, too. He was an intelligent, warm, sensitive and caring young man, and I was eager to see what direction his life would take. I can't help but wonder what he would be like today. I miss him very much.

I will never agree with his solution, but it was his choice to make and I have to learn to live with it. I am absolutely certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that I will see him again. Only then will I get answers to my questions. I have no choice but to wait until that time.

**Nicki Wright
TCF, MO-KAN, KS**

Life Is Something That Comes and Goes

***Life is something that comes and goes
As silently as the gentle wind blows - one day here, the
next day gone.***

You try to understand the reason of it all,
Why some remain when others are called.
The purpose is there if only you see
That only God knows what will be.

***Life is something that comes and goes as silently as the
gentle wind blows.***

I pray and pray for the day
When I will hear my brother say,
"I love you kid sister, I'll see you soon.
Think of me when you look at the moon".
I look outside and see the moon so bright,
As full as can be, shedding its light.
I stare at the stars and the heavens above
And remember my brother so full of love.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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He was my friend, my father, my keeper,
And since he died, the road seems steeper.
But I must have faith in Jesus, My Lord,
Who helps me understand the truth of His word.

Life is something that comes and goes

As silently as the gentle wind blows - one day here, the next day gone.

***Breta Dodd, Age 16
TCF, Grand Junction, CO***

Bittersweet Memories

When my son, Todd, was in graduate school at Texas A&M, he was offered the opportunity of a lifetime....to go to Europe with his Professor and several other students for six weeks. The group would be studying and living at Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria, and would take field trips to various countries to assess manufacturing and other businesses in Europe. At that time Todd was working part-time, his wife was working full-time and money was tight. He stopped in my office one afternoon and mentioned that he had been invited to go to Europe with his group but didn't see how he could do it financially. Board and room would be free, but he would be responsible for travel expenses.

"Todd," I told him, "this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to go to Europe and study, observe and broaden your horizons. You'll be able to travel on your own and see several countries before you come back home. Of course you can go. You must go."

He protested that money was a problem. I told him that I would buy him a Euro Rail pass. I mentioned that I knew my Dad would be very pleased to pay his airfare. He finally agreed that this was a possibility, but he was independent and didn't like taking money from others. At 26 years of age he felt that he should be standing on his own. He had paid his tuition and books and living expenses without any help from me. I was very proud of him for taking his adulthood seriously, and I told him of my great pride in his accomplishments and my faith in his abilities to succeed.

"Think of it as our gift to you....a gift to return to the family's roots, see where the Mennen family lived and get the feel of all they left behind. It will be exactly 150 years in May since the Mennen family left Germany. I think there is a message here for you. Go for all of us." He said he'd think about it.

I called my Dad that night and told him about Todd's lifetime opportunity and his dilemma about the expense of the trip. Dad, who was a rich man in friends, experiences and happiness, was stable financially but certainly not wealthy.

My Dad's first comment was, "He's not thinking about passing this up, is he?" When I told him that Todd was thinking just that, he said, "No, absolutely not. I can pay for his airline ticket. That would bring me more pleasure than going there myself. I'll call him." And so, he did. Of course, Todd could not say no to his Grandpa. This wasn't done in our family. He graciously accepted Dad's offer and everything was in place for the trip to Europe.

On Todd's 27th birthday, May 17, 1994, I drove him to Intercontinental Airport in Houston and went in to wait with him before his flight departed. I gave him his Euro Pass and the phone card. He protested about the phone card. I told him it was a birthday present and to use it to talk to his son and his wife while he was in Europe. We spoke about his birthday, all that had transpired in his 27 years of life and all that the future would bring. Then he was called to board his flight and I watched him walk down the gateway to the first really big adventure of his life. I waited at the window and watched his plane taxi out with tears in my eyes. My son had grown up to be one special man.

While in Europe Todd saw many countries as he traveled on his Euro pass. He visited factories that were once behind the Iron Curtain. He bought me a set of crystal wine glasses in Czechoslovakia and shipped them to my office. I treasure those crystal wine glasses. Every few days he would send me a postcard from a different place. He would write about the places he saw and the people he met in Europe. He had a great time with his group from A&M and they bonded for life. These were Todd's first, and probably only friends in his adult years. When the rest of the class took a break to party, he went with his Professor to spend several days in Switzerland. He enjoyed his Professor's company and together they traveled and saw the sights, talking about life, education, business, family, history and the golden wisdom inherent in broadened horizons.

Todd traveled to Greece and Rome and then to the small town in Germany that was the home of the Mennen family during the early 1800s. Todd continued to send postcards and to call me about three times a week. We were actually communicating better than we had in several years. Perhaps seeing Europe gave him a better perspective of the values that I had tried to impart to him as a child. Maybe the broader perception brought home the real meaning of life to him. Maybe it gave him some insight into who he really was and what I really wanted for my son.

In late July the class left Europe and headed back to the US. Those heady days and nights together in Europe were now memories to be shared on infrequent visits after graduate school.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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But the lessons my son learned while in Europe helped to form the man he would become. Life can be hard...he saw this in the villages and cities of Eastern Europe where the Soviets had maintained control since WWII ended. The poverty, the pollution, the damage to the human psyche were everywhere, and yet there was still hope. Hope that things would be better for these people.

His perspective on his family and the ancestors who chose to travel across the north Atlantic and settle in Wisconsin in the late fall of 1844 became a part of his identity. No longer were these people just names on a paper. Their lives and decisions had a direct impact on who he was and how he lived.

Todd returned to A&M in the fall to complete his course of studies. In the interim he became the joyful father of triplet daughters. On a sunny April afternoon, one of the girls, Caitlin, died in his arms, just a day after she was born. This had a profound effect on Todd. But he persevered, studying, working and finally graduating in May of 1995 with an MBA from Texas A&M. I gave him a book that day. "Oh, The Places You Will See" by Dr. Seuss seemed so appropriate for that moment. I thought he would see much in a long, well lived life.

He kept in touch with his friends from his graduate days. They would talk, email and visit occasionally in twos and threes; once in a while all of them got together again, reminiscing about their days in graduate school and their time in Europe.

They came together one final time as a group on December 23, 2002, to say goodbye to Todd. As I watched this group of successful men and women, I realized that my son had touched so many lives. Jeff, one of the men in his group, gave me a picture of Todd and himself...taken on Jeff's wedding day when Todd was his best man. What a treasure that picture is to me. Each of his friends told stories about Todd's adventures in Europe, all the fun they had, the seriousness of much of what they saw and the deep bond they developed with each other. Todd was special to them. And they were special to him.

I know this because I continue to read and re-read Todd's postcards. I saved each one. Last night I read the postcards that Todd sent me from Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Greece. Todd's postcards are treasures of another time when the horizon held such promise, each moment was so sweet and death was not at our doorstep. There is a bittersweet joy in reliving that time. Life is bittersweet. Sometimes death gives us that insight.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX ⁶

Flying a Kite

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child. I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kites aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky. Kites are fun.

Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman.

Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites.

In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one half months old. I never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died. Immediately after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nauset, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.



Daniel Max Rausch
TCF, New Haven, CT
In Memory of my son, Max Benjamin Rausch



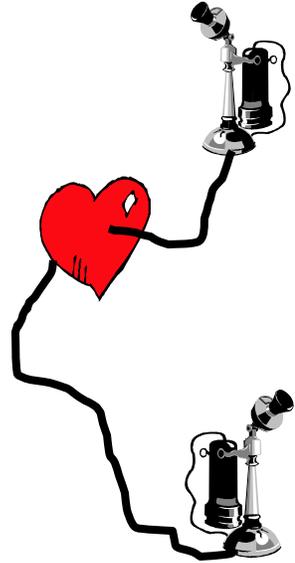
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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
- 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.

Mother's Day Brings Joy and Pain

Mother's Day used to mean special times, great moments, sweet gifts and acknowledgement of the deep bond that Mothers share with their children. I have many happy memories of Mother's Days past. Their value is incalculable.

But that was before . . . everything now is measured in "before" and "after." When I lost my only child, Mother's Day changed. Now Mother's Day has a different meaning . . . one that is not as happy as it once was, but one that still reinforces the many years I shared with my son on this earth.

I was considering this strange paradigm, this shift in my thinking over the past six plus years, and I have come to the conclusion that eventually bereaved parents begin to accept the death of their children on a subconscious level. But before that happens, our subconscious minds wage war on our conscious minds and we experience such terrible emotional lows. It's an internal fight for each of us. Along with the fight to survive, to acquire the will to continue living, we are battling internal forces that must resolve themselves. Once that internal war ends, our healing begins. We will always love and miss our children. We will always shed copious tears for no reason. But something inside of us has shifted, shaping our perspective from this point forward.

So, this Mother's Day I will acknowledge my beautiful son, the wonderful life that he lived, the joy I received in raising him and the wisdom I acquired through the gift of my child. We learn unconditional love when we become mothers. We learn foresight, gentleness, joys in the simple elements of life. I will remember past Mother's Days and think of the wonder that is my only child. I will remember him with much love, more than a few tears and a special sense of thankfulness that his life graced mine for over 35 years.

I will honor the fact that I am a mother. Although my son does not share this earthly plane with me, he is forever my child and I am forever his mother. This is a bond that time, space and death do not alter. Quietly, with serenity and peace in my heart, I will mark this Mother's Day doing what I want to do. I will know what that will be when I get there. Live in the moment, that's another element of life that I learned from my son.

We are each unique on our grief journey, and we will each mark this Mother's Day in a different way. Whatever your choice might be, make it your day . . . your day to celebrate the eternal bond between mother and child. There is nothing more beautiful.

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



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

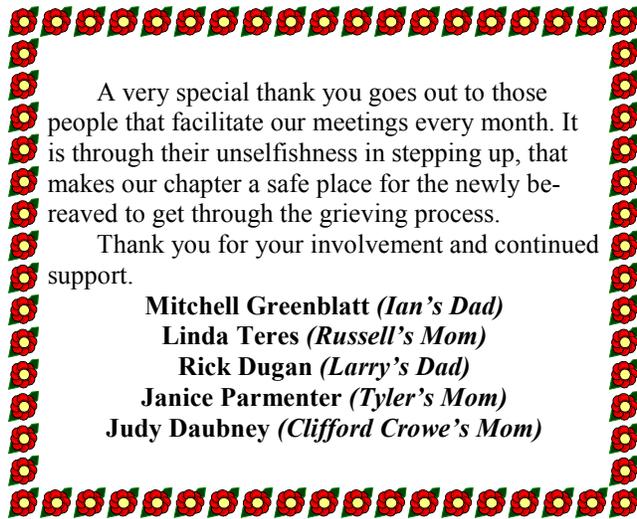


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I told Paul, *I know this sounds crazy, but I feel that if I leave I might come home and find a note on the door that says: "Hi, Mom! Sorry I missed you. Catch you later. Love, Aaron."*

Six years later, I am not anxious about leaving home; I don't worry that I might miss a visit. The shock and disbelief of early grief has passed away and the reality of Aaron's death has settled on my soul. Though I know that I will never again see my son walk through the door, I also know that I know, I will never leave Aaron behind. He goes where I go. Still, I will be leaving a piece of my heart in the old house. Should you visit, listen for the gentle beat. You might sense its rhythm somewhere about, gazing out a tree-shaded window, lingering over a bloom in the garden, or drifting gently across the sky. And you will know that a house holds more than the stuff of memories. A house can hold a heart.

Frankie Wilford
TCF, Carrollton-Farmers Branch, TX
In Memory of my son, Aaron



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 Storms of Grief

I've often thought about how differently grief affects those left behind when someone has died. To me there are three groups of bereaved. There are those that lose someone they loved very much and are most affected. The middle group are those that cared about the person and will miss them, but their death doesn't change their lives. The third group are sorry that the person has died, but are largely unaffected by their death.

Now envision those groups on a mountain. When my son died, I felt like I was on a mountaintop, alone with a storm raging around me. Thunder and lightning filled the sky, thick clouds enveloped me, and a cold hard rain fell upon me. Winds buffeted my body from every side. There was no shelter, no place to sit or lie down. Others who were suffering as much as I (my husband and daughters) were on their own mountaintop, and we could derive no comfort from each other. I stood there, sometimes railing against God, sometimes feeling as if my heart had been ripped out, sometimes just feeling an emptiness so deep, I feared I would drown in it. Days, weeks, months passed.

The middle group of people stood on the side of the mountain (close friends and relatives). They also were caught in the storm, but they had some shelter and each other. They wanted to comfort me but the path upward was winding and rocky and I could find no path down to them.

The last group of people were at the bottom of the mountain in the valley. There, the sun was shining and the breeze was gentle. They could see the storm I was caught in, but could do nothing to help me.

Sometimes the storm would subside and I could see something besides dismal gray and I had respite from the wind and rain. But this would be followed by another raging storm. Back and forth, I never knew what to expect.

Eventually the sky would clear and I was able to find a path to those that cared and could offer me hugs and a shoulder to cry on. The storm was still there, but there was also shelter and I wasn't alone.

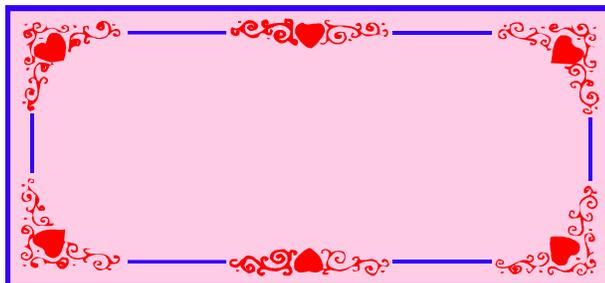
It has been 12 years since Todd died and I have been able to come completely down off that desolate mountaintop and live in the valley of sunshine. Sometimes I stay there quite a while. Sometimes I climb that mountain and experience that same emptiness and sadness.

We all know that this kind of storm may brew on those special days - birthdays, holidays, family events. We are also blind-sided by those times that just take our breath away. . . being in a place they loved, hearing their music, smells, movies, ballgames, seeing their friends. We really have no control over these unexpected, sudden storms.

I have learned to give into them and let the tears fall. I can live with these storms and accept them as part of my life because my child lived and I loved him with all my heart. I cannot change the fact that my child has died and I will not change my love.

Barb Seth
TCF, Madison, WI
In Memory of my son, Todd

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



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.”*