



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.

November-December 2019



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Vol. 24 Issue 6

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:

November 19 & December 8

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.

November 26 & No December Meeting

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. ©2019

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 508/881-2111
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

Kendra Mae Kiraithe in loving memory of her son **David Alexander Schnegg** on his anniversary October 22nd.

Mrs. Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter **Monica Michelle Curran**. "Always loved and never forgotten".

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Eldridge in loving memory of their son **Kevin R. Eldridge** on his birthday November 14th.

Mr. Kenneth Bleakney in loving memory of his daughter **Erica Bleakney** on her anniversary November 5th.

Chapter News

Our chapter again is planning a Candle Light Ceremony and a social event on Sunday December 8th, in place of our regular meeting on the third Tuesday of the month. The committee selected "The 45 Restaurant" in Medway. We will have a choice of three meals (1) Baked Haddock, (2) Steak Tips or (3) Chicken Parmesan. Menu includes garden salad, meal, coffee and dessert. There will be a cut-off date of November 19th. We will not accept add-on's after the November 23rd date. All checks are to be made out to "TCF Metrowest". Please, (if possible) no cash. Send to Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr. Milford Ma. 01757-1265. The cost will be \$33.00 per person. I will be sending out more information in early October along with an order form if you plan on attending. If you have any questions, please call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 or e-mail me at headly@comcast.net. I know it's hard to plan so far ahead but we would love to continue making this an annual event so please give it some thought.





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, November and December. 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

November

ALAN R. STUCHINS
ERICA BLEAKNEY
CASEY W. CALKINS
CONOR A. ISETTS
SAMUEL O'DAFE OTOBO
SEAN P. COTTER
TIMOTHY JOHN KOVALCHIK
CHRISTOPHER J. LOUGHRAN
BENJAMIN ARTHUR MOUL
CYNTHIA ZOTTOLI
SEAN PATRICK MOORE
DENNIS HENNIGAN
ANDREA RENEE BOSWORTH
MANUEL (MANNY) PENICHE
AUSTIN MILES CASWELL
RALPH RICHARD RUSSO

December

LARRY DUGAN
STEVEN GRILLO
AARON STEVEN GRAY
JAMES S. CARPENTER VI
OLIVIA MARIE CATARINA
KEVIN HOLLAND
PAUL FERRIER Jr.
JOELLE M. SHAVER
ELISSA DAON
MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER BERKS
SEAN M. THERRIEN
RICHARD PELLEGRINO



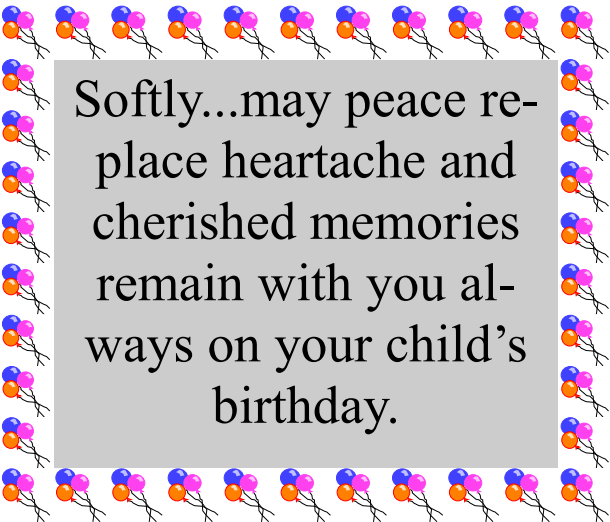
Birthdays

November

JOHN GARVEY
DIXON BERGMAN
KEVIN R. ELDREDGE
JONATHAN BRET LOVEJOY
DANIEL L. PHIPPS
CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK
COURTNEY JOHNSON
ANDREW M. LYNCH

December

JENNIFER T. GARDNER
LISA RANDALL
CASEY W. CALKINS
MARC R. PEARLMAN
BRETT COHEN
JAMES S. CARPENTER VI
RYAN ROBERT DeFOREST
EVAN GEORGE REA



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



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.

I Am Your Sister and Always Will Be

"I am your sister and always will be." That's how Susie signed her cards to me. After a while, she shortened it to, "I am..." And of course I knew the rest of it. Susie was two and one-half years younger than I. She was alive one evening talking on the phone to Mom about the Oscars and to Dad about moving. The next day she was found. Whatever it was--it ended her life and changed mine forever.

There was a wonderful side of my sister that I didn't pay enough attention to. She was a kind and loving person, always ready to shelter lost animals and lost souls. When she was in a good mood, her smiles warmed my heart. Yet I spent most of my life wishing that things were different: wishing that she thought more of herself, wishing that she would take my advice, wishing that she were happier, wishing that we could accept each other.

Now, for two years, I've done nothing but wish she were here so we could have another chance to work at our relationship. Now, I wish that I had been able to give her my unconditional love & support. (She needed it and deserved it.) Now, I wish that I could have been with her that night so she would not have been alone. Now, I wish that I would have held her in my arms and told her how very much I loved her. Because, Susie, I am your sister and always will be.

*Michele Walters
TCF, Baltimore, MD*

NOVEMBER



Memories Of Your Face

I woke this morning
Finding everything in a haze
Wiping tears from my eyes
I saw your smiling face.

I reached out and touched you
Yet all I could feel was pain
You felt nothing
From your life within a frame.

I spoke, receiving no reply
I told you that I loved you
I asked you
Why?

I'll never have another
No one to take your place
All I have, little brother, are memories
And the picture of your face.



*Lisa Walmsey
TCF, Sarasota, FL*





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 (*Tyler's Mom*)

Judy Daubney (*Clifford Crowe's Mom*)

The "New Normal"

In a matter of days, it will be the end of another year. Most everyone is talking about what they will do in the new year and what resolutions they will make (and, in my case, soon break). Maybe they will resolve to lose some weight, begin an exercise program, take up a new hobby or sign up for some educational refresher courses. After all, they now have a shiny new year to begin anew and rid themselves of those extra pounds or maybe shake the cobwebs out of their stagnant brains.

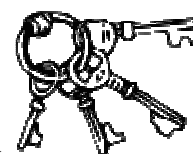
However, for those who have had the title "bereaved parent" sorrowfully thrust upon them, the above seems inconsequential. For them, everything has changed since the death of their child, especially their priorities. What was once so important is now comparatively trivial. What once gave them pleasure now feels somehow insignificant. Rather than make plans for a "new year", there are many who must learn to live with what has now become for them the "new normal."

Oftentimes when someone comes to a TCF meeting for the first time, they will mention something that they have been thinking or doing and are worried that they have "lost their mind" and that everyone else in the group will think they are "crazy." For example, before Nina died I wouldn't venture into a cemetery even if it were broad daylight. I wouldn't even look in the direction of one. In short, the idea of just being at a cemetery frightened me. But after Nina died, I often made midnight treks to the cemetery alone. I spent time there decorating the site of her grave with balloons and windsocks indicating the season or an upcoming holiday while playing her favorite CDs. I remember the heartbreaking paradox of those first holidays and birthdays when I should have been shopping for her gifts, instead of walking through the stores looking for just the perfect item to add to the grave site "décor".

Surely I was going totally insane! I was almost afraid to mention this to the other bereaved parents in my TCF group. But these same parents reassured me that if I felt the need to go to the cemetery, for whatever reason and whatever time, day or night, or wanted to decorate Nina's burial place (sadly, one of the only ways I could continue to be a parent to my daughter), that while maybe not the norm for those untouched by grief, for me and other bereaved parents it was.

We would never have imagined this way of thinking would become a normal way of life for us. That each major family celebration or event would be marred by sadness that our child wasn't there to share in it. That we would speak of funerals, memorial services, cremation, accident reports and death certificates just as if they were commonplace things that everyone spoke of, and when we stepped back and really thought about it, were horrified by the way it sounds, horrified that for us this had become "normal." For those with surviving children, when they were late from somewhere, counting the seconds and feeling sick to our stomachs upon hearing the wail of an ambulance...again, for many of us, the new normal. Just recently a dear friend, who is also a bereaved parent, and I were standing in the parking lot talking about how we hoped that the ground at the cemetery wouldn't be frozen yet so we could still pound in the metal stakes from the latest wind chimes we had purchased for our child's grave. We then spoke of the ways we knew of how to get around that if it was (such as, put hot water in a thermos to bring to the grave site in order to thaw the ground). We then shook our heads and forlornly chuckled at what we had just spoken of, knowing how absurd anyone but another bereaved parent would find our conversation.

I don't believe there has ever been a meeting that a newly bereaved parent has attended where a measure of confidence in their sanity wasn't restored upon learning from others that what they were feeling was natural for someone who has experienced the death of a child. When they mention how they continually lose their keys or can't remember where they put an item five seconds after they set it down, or how just merely walking down the cereal aisle at the grocery store and seeing their child's favorite brand made them leave everything in their shopping cart and flee the store, or how they swear they saw their child's face in a passing car or in a crowd of people, they can look around the circle at our TCF group meetings and watch as we nod our heads in acknowledgment, for we have experienced the same.





THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from page 5)

Even though our stories are different and we can't know exactly what each other is feeling, we, more than anyone, come closest, and can validate each other's so-called "crazy thoughts" with the reassurance that what is felt and experienced is, for us, the "new normal."

Attending those first few meetings were difficult, but I am so glad that I found my TCF friends. I believe that it truly has been my salvation. Though I wish I could have the old normal back, I am eternally grateful to the others at our TCF meetings who have helped me learn to live with and adjust to this unwanted role of bereaved parent. If you have never attended one or it has been a while since you have, I hope that you will come to a meeting. There are many of us who want to give back and to help by assisting you in your passage through the "new normal."

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF, St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina

Letting Go of Misunderstandings

It must be a truism that we all feel a little misunderstood in our grief. Ever since May 25, 1989, when our little girl died after only 44 hours of life, we have faced a variety of attitudes regarding her death and our mourning process, from downright rudeness, to tremendous compassion and understanding. Yet, all we ask is the chance to allow her to "BE." We loved her from the beginning, and when she died, our love didn't simply stop. Quite the opposite, in fact, and more complex in ways because she is dead. Even so, we want to give her life significance. We want her to be proud of her Mommy and Daddy. We want her to exist not only in our hearts, but in everyone else's as well.

A bit much to ask, do you think? If the truth be told, we probably all feel very much the same way. We have each been faced with attitudes that are hard to understand, whether our child was miscarried at eight weeks or lived to be 40 years-old. We, as parents, simply cannot allow any indifference concerning our children. Some part of us pleads for new understanding from our family and friends.

We were very concerned that folks would think since Lindsay was "just a baby" when she died, then we only had a little amount of grief, or that we really have no reason to mourn her passing.

I held on to this misunderstanding, even (because of a few bad experiences) with some dear friends of compassion.

There are a few who consider us lucky, and I concede their point. In contrast to some of the other stories we hear in The Compassionate Friends circle, our child's life and death seem relatively simple. Sometimes I want to get down on my knees and beg your forgiveness for asking you to understand my grief when yours seems the ultimate tragedy. My heart aches for each and every child who has died.

Who am I to compare our circumstances with the one who lost all her children, or their only child, or their first-born son, or the one whose son was in and out of the hospital his whole life, or even the one whose child died from miscarriage? *At least we had nine months together!*

Who am I to determine which cause of death is worse? Would it be an automobile accident, or suicide, or murder, or sudden infant death, or a long-term illness, or a stillbirth? Who could possibly say? Who would "prefer" one over the other? Surely not I. *I would prefer no death at all.* And what is the "perfect" age for a child to die? In the early weeks of pregnancy, before the mother even felt life? At birth, before hearing a cry? Or a few days or weeks later? Would it be better if we got to spend more time with them, five, ten, twenty years? How long is long enough? It's always "too soon."

Is it harder to mourn the memories we do have, or the memories we do not have? Is it harder to mourn for what was, or what was supposed to be? Is it harder to bury the baby child, or the one who lived 50 years or more?

Enough of this! There is no need to compare. If we have any hope at all of anyone understanding our agony, then we only have each other, my dear Compassionate Friends. Our baby's life and death may seem effortless and uncomplicated. She was born. She died. The end. But it's not the end.

However simple Lindsay's little life may seem, the process of mourning her death has never been simple. It is the most intense pain I have ever suffered, just as yours is. It is a shock to the system with life-altering effects. The death of any child at any age, under any circumstances, is the most horrifying, devastating, humbling event in our lives. Before joining The Compassionate Friends, I got the distinct impression that any mention of our baby was a sign of mental instability. Thank you for showing me differently. The truth of the matter is, there will always be those who think I'm a little "crazy" where Lindsay is concerned, and there will always be those who cannot understand. But I can't let it stand in the way of my recovery any longer. I am determined to let it go, and cross this stepping stone towards reorganizing my life in a positive way.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST

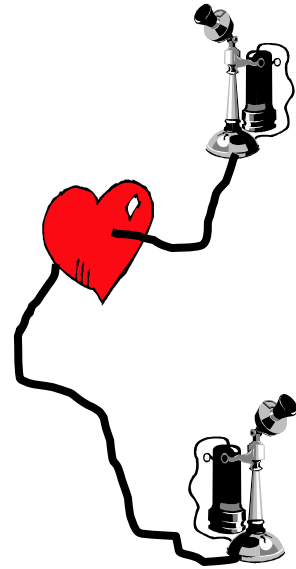


Phone Friends

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)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



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Who could have known the exquisite difference your brief life would make upon mine? Who could have known a tiny baby would show me the beauty of a sunrise, the wonder of a rainbow, or the pain of a tear? Who could have known an innocent child would take away my fear of death, and point me in the direction of heaven? Who could have known that you would succeed where so many others have failed?

Dana Gensler
TCF, South Central, KY
In Memory of my daughter, Lindsay

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

Transition in Grief

It is good to speak of our children, to recall the wonderful memories of their lives. It is good to honor our children with ritual, ceremony, prayer, and thanksgiving for the gift that will always be our child. It is good to celebrate the life of our child, to cherish our time with them.

It is also wise to acknowledge that by honoring our child in these ways, we are doing our grief work. This work also involves pushing, pulling, and dragging ourselves through the purgatorial fog that transcends our every thought after our child dies. The grief is overwhelming; the process of grief work is demanding, punishing, and often harsh.

Either we stay in one place, "stuck" in our grief, or we reach out and help ourselves. There are no other choices.

The loss of our child to death is the most traumatic event of our adult lives. We have lost the future, and we have lost an immense piece of ourselves when our child died. We must work to rebuild ourselves. Rebuild ourselves for a new life: a life without our child sharing this physical plane with us.

But as we share our child with others, speak of the life that no longer is, celebrate that life in ritual, ceremony, and memories shared, we are doing our grief work. At first it is difficult. The throat swells, the breathing is shallow, and the words are so difficult to find. But we pursue, for we do not want the memory of our child to be erased.

We carry our child forward into the future; we see the world for two now. We cherish this new journey that we take for our child and ourselves. This effort is our child's legacy. Our child will live as long as we live....through our words, actions, thoughts, memories, and memorial efforts.

And as we do these things that are good, we find the burden lifts ever so slightly. Days, weeks, months, and then years pass. At some point we realize that we, too, have transitioned. Our subconscious mind has accepted the worst that life can give, and we have emerged as different people cherishing the goodness that is always our precious child.

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

The Warmth of Compassion

I thought that the end of the world had come when we lost our precious son, Patrick, to cancer.

Eighteen months have now passed, flowers still bloom, traffic races by and the little children play happily.

Breath goes in and goes out. It just does. How can this be?

Compassion seems rationed out. I now understand that people are well meaning, often really hurting for you. Their words come out wrongly. It hurts doesn't it?

Recently I have found some solace in speaking in a small group of bereaved parents.

It is a wonderful thing to talk about your child. How good it is that you want to hear some of my story. TCF has helped me and others along the way. How good that you look at my son's picture, bear with my pride in him and allow me to tell my sorrow.

What is helping? What is hindering? Such gentleness to discover and discuss these things. Venture out even when the night is cold, the compassion is not.



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



(continued from page 8)

Thanks a million to everyone whose act of compassion reminds us that the flowers do still bloom.

***Judy Dowling
TCF, Victoria, Australia
In Memory of my son, Patrick***

The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost an Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should the child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. Shame and Guilt - Especially if the infant was still-born or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.

2. No Memories - Parents may only have "souvenirs of the occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

3. Loneliness in Grief - It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is newborn, they may give the impression you are grieving unnecessarily, they hope you can "forget this baby" and "have another one."

4. Neglected Fathers - Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby, too.

5. Mothers vs. Fathers - Since the mother has bonded with her child during the pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father's, who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

***Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley
TCF, St. Louis, MO***

From My Heart . . . To Yours

The newly bereaved parents looked around the group at the meeting and hoped and prayed they wouldn't still be attending TCF meetings 20, 30, and 40 years from now. Well actually, we at TCF hope you will be.

You see, the bereaved parents who answered the call in their hearts to continue to open the door for monthly meetings and to go each and every month with arms open for hugs and tissue boxes passed around, are the one reason why you had a place to go and pour your hearts out, cry your eyes out, and feel justified in what you were experiencing since your child died.

If it were not for these bereaved parents who buried a child decades ago, there might not be anyone there to sit around and take the time to care about you, to listen with understanding, to offer support, to know what you are going through. It might have been many years ago, but those shoulders were dragging at one time, too.

Forty years ago, burying a child hurt just as much as it does for you today. Twenty years ago, the pain of loss was no different than it is for you today. These parents know. They understand. That's why they are still here. It is not because they can't move on with their own grief. It is because they want to help you move on with yours.

Thank goodness someone in your area listened to the voice in their heart to start a TCF group, to organize meetings, to put out a newsletter, to answer your phone call, to share their own story. Because of that, you feel safe to share your pain. And every time you share your feelings, every time you cry with someone, every time you work through your pain, healing is slowly and silently creeping into your heart.

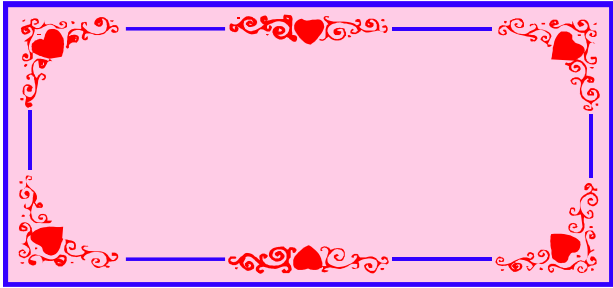
One day you might feel you don't need to attend any more TCF meetings. We know that time will come. We will be happy for you. But if it should happen that a little voice in your heart continues to whisper . . . "Now it's your turn to help someone else," be sure and listen, because someone else is going to have to take the place of those who have been there for so many years before you arrived.

So, look around at those who have opened the doors for you and helped you. Then listen to your heart . . . always listen to your heart.

***Cathy Heider
TCF, North Central, Iowa Chapter***



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may always shine.

**Light a candle for all
children who have died**

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