



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.

September - October 2012



2012 The Compassionate Friends, All rights Reserved

Vol. 17 Issue 5

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:

September 18th October 16th

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:

September 25th October 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. ©2012

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 | 508/529-6942 |
| Janice Parmenter | 508/528-5715 |
| Linda Teres | 508/620-0613 |
| 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

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

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

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. Richard Parmenter in loving memory of their son *Tyler Ray Parmenter* on his birthday September 4th.

Ms. Betty Myers in loving memory of her son *William Bruse-Tagoe* on his birthday September 10th.

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boudreau in loving memory of their son *Nicholas L. Boudreau*.

Mrs. Virginia Lombard in loving memory of her son *Robert L. Lombard Jr.* on his birthday July 22. Loved, and miss you. Mom & family.

Mrs. Dorothy Pisapia in loving memory of her son *Matthew Pisapia* on his birthday September 30th.

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Slopek in loving memory of their daughter *Laurie Ann Slopek* on her 18th anniversary and 50th birthday this year. Still missed by all, Mom and Dad.

Mrs. June Glennon in loving memory of her nephew *Harris M. Tredeau*.

Mr. & Mrs. Flavio DiCarlo in loving memory of their daughter *Geraldine DiCarlo*.

CHAPTER TIDBITS

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 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*.

Ed Motuzas



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



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 September and October. 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

September

CINDY CABRAL-BEATSON
CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK
JASON R. BOGHOSIAN
KATHY A. BURNS
NICHOLAS MICHAEL LEONI
DONNA M. McHUGH
ANDREW W. CUSHER
CHRIS GRIFFITHS
WAYNE A. FRYE
KELLI S. DONOVAN
GREG BRUNO

October

JOHN PATRICK McGUE
BRUCE F. BENNETT
GIANNA ROSE THERESE RABINOWITZ
WILLIAM E. DeLORIE JR.
MARC R. PEARLMAN
CLIFFORD CROWE

Birthdays

September

TYLER PARMENTER
JON A. ALBA
WILLIAM BRUSE-TAGOE
RUSSELL J. TERES
SAMANTHA HAMILTON
EMMA FRANCES DALTON
DWAYNE V. BILLINGSLEY
ANTHONY (TONY) COLUCCI
MATTHEW PISAPIA

October

MICHAEL W. ALBA
KATHY A. BURNS
KRISTA SCHONBERG
COREY S. VAUTIER
DENNIS M. HENNIGAN
GIANNA ROSE THERESE RABINOWITZ
ALICIA M. WARD
DONNA M. McHUGH
MARINA E. KEEGAN
NICHOLAS MICHAEL LEONI
CAREN L. FIRTH
CHRISTINA M. ROSSETTI

Chapter Note

Mark this date, **September 5th** on your calendar. Alan Pederson is coming to the Metrowest Chapter of Compassionate Friends. Alan's "Angels Across the U.S.A. Tour 2012" will be at St. Mary's Church, Holliston, Ma. starting at 7:00 p.m.

As an in-demand keynote speaker and workshop presenter, Alan has been featured at many international, national, and regional conferences including The World Gathering on Bereavement, The Compassionate Friends National Conference, and The National Gathering of Bereaved Parents of the USA.

His music is popular with bereaved people around the world and is used at hundreds of candle lighting services, balloon and butterfly releases, and by hundreds of professionals and organizations as a healing tool for the bereaved.

Alan's message is simple, "We were put on this earth to love them for as long as WE live... not for as long as THEY lived." He believes that healing comes slow, but does come as we reach out to others who share this journey and offer our hand to help.

With a gentle mix of humor and straight-from-the-heart talk wrapped around powerful songs about love and loss, an evening with Alan Pedersen will make for a unique, healing and memorable concert experience.



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.

Grief's Array of Emotions

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children. But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness.

However, as my life continues to move forward I come across new struggles. I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't be angry with him because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.

It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship. Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death...and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from last page)

I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

Carrie's brother, Carl Pueschel, died January 19, 1996

Carrie Kears In Memory of my brother, Carl

What My Daughter Taught Me in Two Days

Anyone who knows me knows, I believe that everything happens for a reason.

I do not know the reason for what happened to Bailey. So far the doctors don't know either. They say it could have been a virus that attacked and destroyed a perfect pregnancy. They say that we might never know what happened to her medically. I have spent countless hours trying to sort things out lately. But I don't think we will ever truly know why she was taken.

I do know, however, that Bailey touched many lives in the short time she was here. And I'd like to share how she transformed my life in just two days; forever changing the way I look at things.

She made me realize that I need to slow down and cherish the "little things" in life that people talk about and I could not even see.

She makes me want to be a better father, a better husband, a better son, a better friend, and a better person.

She brought me new meanings to the words *compassion, caring, family, friendship, forgiving, unconditional love, selflessness, and thankfulness*.

Some of the things she taught me have to do with the way I look and "see" things. For example . . .

When I first heard we were pregnant, I was excited, of course. But I was also scared silly. I remember selfishly thinking in the first couple of months of the pregnancy about our life. I even asked my wife ". . . Why do we want a baby now?" We have three other kids; 16, 13, and 9. My God, I am 43 years old!

We have the perfect life; we come and go as we want, we do what we want, we vacation when and where we want. Our other children are older and can pretty much take care of themselves. All I could think about was myself and how a baby would get in the way . . . **Now, all I think about is her and how I would give anything to have her in my life.**

Recently, I was having lunch with a friend and there was a crying baby close by. I remember thinking how annoying it was and how I wished it would be quiet. I hate to admit it, but I was even questioning if I was ready for that noise again in my life . . . I never got to hear Bailey cry. **Now, I would give anything to hear my baby cry.**

I remember "teasing" Kim about changing the baby's diapers and that she would have to be in charge of that department. I would have helped her of course, but not really enjoyed it, and probably complained about it . . . **Now, I would give anything to change Bailey's diapers.**

We talked about daycare and complained about the high cost of daycare . . . **Now, I would give anything to write that check.**

I would not let Kim buy any diapers until just recently at Sam's Club, even though she wanted to buy the first diapers 6 months ago . . . Then, in those last hours, I hoped and prayed for Bailey to wet as it would have been a positive sign of recovery. **Now, I would give anything to get to pay for diapers.**

I had not been tucking in our other children at night as faithfully as I once did, thinking, They're old enough now . . . **Now, I will tuck them in until THEY tell me not to. I forgot how much that meant to them.**

I used to see children throwing temper tantrums when we were out and sometimes think, *Thank God my kids are older so I do not have to deal with that . . . Now, I would give anything to see Bailey throw a temper tantrum.*

We have brand-new white carpet in our house and I remember thinking and hoping that it would not get soiled with the new baby . . . **Now, I'd love to have that problem.**

I recently had a discussion with my wife about how we would deal with the night feedings. I thought to myself, *She is going to be a stay-at-home mom. That's her job. I need to be rested. And she even agreed that she would be doing most of that 'chore' . . .* Oh, how blind I was. **Now, I would be so thankful to be exhausted when I went in to work because I was up half the night with the baby.**

My friends at work have been teasing me and saying how my world was going to change soon with the baby coming. They were right, but for a different reason. Thanks to my daughter Bailey, my world and life have changed forever. I am so thankful I knew her and I am grateful for what she taught me in just two days.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from last page)

I love you, Bailey. I thank you, and I will miss you forever.

Steven wrote and delivered this at Bailey's funeral. He and his wife, Kimberly, have three other children, Whitney, Taylor, and Jessica.

**Steve Bryant
TCF, Des Moines, IA
In Memory of Bailey**

Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know there is no "quick fix" that magically lets us get on with our lives, and grief can be physically exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress—granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if death is from prolonged or serious illness there is grieving during the illness. The second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year. However, no two people have the same grief timetable. If we feel that we are not making progress, is there some way to determine whether or not we may need professional help or evaluation or at least reassurance? The following considerations may help you decide:

- Extended withdrawal from the world around you and prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities.
- Self-imposed isolation where you do not want to be around anyone—friends, family or others.
- Becoming too scared to be alone. You must have someone around all the time.
- Anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you.
- Depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged and occurs in original intensity years after the loss.
- Anxiety that interferes with going away from home.
- Dependence on alcohol or medications to cope or forget.
- An emotional "logjam" resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years.

- Contemplating or attempting suicide to "get away from it all" or to join your child.
- Self-caused illness or physical health problems that do not go away, or the inability to separate the real from the imagined. This kind of illness is different from the "ailments" that most of us experience during the anniversary of our loved one's death.
- Placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections; or being unable to redirect your activities or to shift your focus, so that you can honor your child in a positive way.
- An absence of grief or a numbness, anxiety, sadness, or any kind of overall attitude that negatively affects others around you, including over-protectiveness of your loved ones.
- Converting all emotions into one or two favorite or "safe" emotions—like anger, boredom, or despair—which become all you are feeling, taking the place of grief.
- When talking does not seem to help or there is no one able to listen.

**Libbyrose D. Clark
TCF, Deep East Texas
From information provided by Vera Baron,
LPC,
and Ray Johnson, CSW**

You were on my mind . . .

When I woke up this morning...

You were on my mind. You were on my mind.

You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.

You with the curiosity and excitement
that dads love to be there for.

There's so much of you still with me.
Still with us!

It's not fair that we feel cheated or
that we won't share your ways anymore.

But in reality, after all the tears and
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass
We will have joy and great happiness because
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.

And when I wake up each morning
It will be OK that you were on my mind...

You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will be
forever.

**Michael Tyler
TCF, Lighthouse Chapter, Lewes, DE**



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.



Grief is Timeless

Six years. Has it been that long? Hasn't it been longer? Grief has no time line. The days melt into each other. The sun continues to rise and set. The months come and go. The seasons change. The years mount one on top of the other. How can this be? Don't they know that my son died? Six years ago today his day began but his life ended. At 23 years old he had plans, dreams, goals and a future. He possessed a portion of my future that unfortunately went with him. As a parent I had hopes and dreams for him.

My job of parenting was done. It was his time to spread his wings and soar. I had done all I could. We had weathered the colicky nights together. Many miles were put on the car as I, like many young mothers, drove around at 3:00 a.m. to soothe him. It wasn't about me losing sleep. It was about protecting and caring for my child. It was inherent and instinctual. The fevers, the chicken pox, the flu were tended to. Trips to the Doctor were countless.

Before I knew it school days were upon us. The first day of Kindergarten was traumatic for me as I couldn't imagine letting go of my child. Who would care for him and love him during those 4 hours at school? Well, as it turned out....ME. We walked hand in hand down the hall reading the names on the door to see where he would be each day when he wasn't in my care. I led him into the classroom where we met his young, smiling teacher. He picked out a desk and I helped him unpack his new backpack. We carefully placed his brilliant, unused Crayolas, unopened bottle of glue and blunt scissors in his desk.

How could I leave this child of mine with these strangers? They didn't know that he had trouble pronouncing his "R's". Who would cut the crust off his sandwich? They didn't know him. I stayed until it became obvious that these miniature desks and chairs were meant for the 5-year old kindergarteners and not the parents. Determined that I could do this, I walked out. I turned once to wave and took about a dozen steps back towards my empty, quiet house. But what harm would it do to walk back by and peek in? I did this about half a dozen times. Each time Rick would wave. Finally the teacher came to the door and asked if there was anything she could do for me. After a brief discussion it was decided that she would absolutely need an aide to hand out papers, wipe noses, and just be there for good measure. I became a regular at the school. For each year of his elementary career I was there. Watching this little miracle of mine learn his way in the world filled me with such joy!

I have been forced to find my way after Rick drowned in a tragic accident at the young age of 23. He loved what he did and where he lived. He woke up daily to nature at its finest but raw and untamed. This is what he had dreamed of as a perfect career. I worried but had refrained from interfering as this was what letting go was all about. Wasn't this all going according to plan? Hadn't we covered all the bases? Maybe not. But if I had known how it would play out would I have done things differently? No. His childhood and my years of motherhood were played out exactly as they should have.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from last page)

They were the best years of my life. I have such wonderful memories of my beautiful son. He was the best of me and the best of my husband. We created a miracle and I wouldn't trade that. No, I wouldn't have missed the dance.

I live with great grief but thankfully not guilt because I did the absolute best I could and I am certain that he knew we loved him every day of his life. He had a short life but a good one. He was one of the happiest people I have ever known. He taught me as much as I taught him. He is a blessing to me. No, I wouldn't have missed the dance.

**Dana Rogers
Mother of Rick Rogers
TCF, Galveston Co. Chapter**



Other Area TCF Chapters



MA/CT Border Towns Chapter (Dudley, Webster areas)

Chapter Leaders: Paul & Anne Mathieu
(508) 248-7144.....ampm@charter.net

South Shore Chapter (Hingham, Weymouth areas)
Martha Berman

(781) 337-8649.....mmarthal1@comcast.net

Worcester Chapter
Chapter Leader: Phyllis Simas
(508) 845-1462...mrspbs1@verizon.net

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



The Unanswerable Questions of a Bereaved Parent

It's a quiet Labor Day weekend, unlike when my children were small. Back then, the anticipation of the beginning of school was heavy in the air. My daughter Nina loved school, so I have fond memories of her excitement over who would be her teacher and who would be her classmates, and the two of us shopping for school clothes and supplies. She'd made multiple phone calls to friends trying to decide what to wear for the first day. The morning of was always hectic as four children vied for two showers and bathroom mirrors, to the shouts of, "Mom, do you know where I put my folders?!", "Where's my lunch money?", and, "Hurry up; I am going to miss the bus!"

Pure craziness! I remember, after they had all gotten out the door, I'd breathe a huge sigh of relief. At last....peace again! Little did I know that there would come a time I would actually miss the hubbub of the first day of school and find how agonizingly quiet the house could be.

Not having someone to ready for school gives me more time than I'd like to muse over questions I've wondered about since my child died; things that if I live to be 100 years old, I will never understand. Perhaps you can relate to some of them as well.

For instance, lately, there has been a lot of press and media coverage over the anniversary of the deaths of Elvis (thirty four years) and Princess Diana (fourteen years). Pictures of tearful fans making their pilgrimage to Graceland, along with pictures of Elvis and Princess Di plastered all over magazine covers, newspapers and television screens. Yes - Princess Di, Elvis, John Lennon, President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and many other well-known people have died tragic deaths, but no more tragic than each of our children's deaths. After all, the majority of us never knew these icons except through their fame and/or music. Therefore, I am always amazed at the high tolerance level the world has for allowing the general public to grieve decades later for dead celebrities, but not for someone grieving the loss of their own flesh and blood.

For example, on the first anniversary of Nina's death, my oldest daughter's coworker said to her, "I bet you will be glad when tomorrow comes so you can get on with your life!" It was as if she would wake up the next morning after the year was up and miraculously everything would be okay again! If a bereaved parent wants to take a day off from work on the anniversary of their child's death (especially if it is after the first year or two) or decorate their grave site with balloons or burn a candle by their picture for the day, we are met with disapproving looks or, worse yet, "When are you going to get over it and get some closure?" The dreaded word: closure. Maybe someday it will be understood that for those left behind, there is no such thing as closure. Those we loved who were so much a part of us in life, will forever remain so, even in death.

Something else I pondered comes up every now and then. We will hear someone say, as I did recently, "John Doe was driving in his car when another car cut him off, sent him careening into the ditch where he nearly missed crashing head-on into a telephone pole. He must have had his guardian angel looking after him. I guess it just wasn't his time yet." Why was it my daughter's "time"? And where was her guardian angel?





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)

I look around at all my Compassionate Friends who comprise the circle at our meetings and I wonder the same about their children, whether they were babies, toddlers, school-age children, teenagers and adults; and where were their guardian angels?

If it was our child who died, it was never enough time, no matter what age. We were never supposed to outlive our children. I wish I had an answer, but I don't. It is another one of those questions I will never understand; at least not while I inhabit this planet.

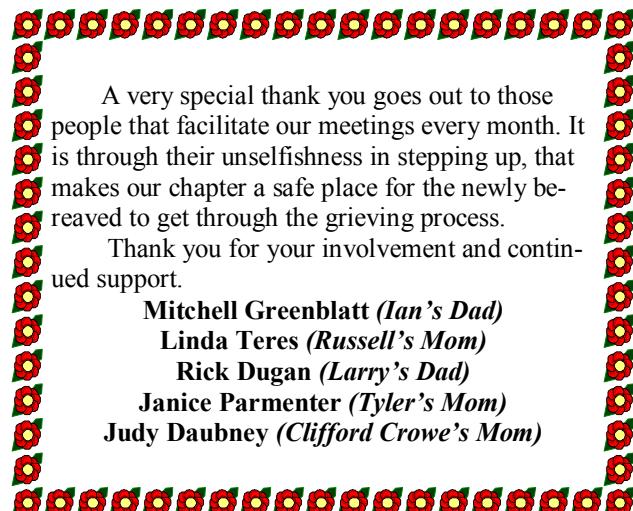
Another quizzicality is the language of grief. It seems the majority of people have problems with saying that someone has "died." They will use such words as "passed away", "crossed over", and "expired", which as Joyce Andrews, member of TCF's board of directors, wrote of a friend who said, "My husband didn't expire; he died. Expired sounds like a subscription!" She also wrote about one of the worst I have heard. An ER doctor told a mother after her child died, "I'm sorry, but your child's condition is not compatible with life." And didn't you often wonder why there isn't a word in our language for those whose child has died? A spouse dies and they are a widow or widower, someone's parents die and they are orphans. Maybe it is just as I read in a poem written by a bereaved parent: there isn't a word that could ever come close to describing a "pain that cannot be believed."

Only someone who has experienced the death of someone they love would understand how vexing these questions are; another reason why I am eternally grateful for the parents of TCF. You have listened to the questions like those above and didn't turn away. You have cried a torrent of tears with me as I screamed out the unanswerable question of "Why?" You who have held my trembling hand, passed me the tissue box at our meetings, and warmed my heart with your unconditional friendship, and, last but not least, given me the best and biggest bear-hugs whenever I needed one.

Maybe in our lifetimes we will be allowed to grieve our loved ones for as long as we need, and words like "closure" and "expired" will no longer be part of the language of grief. And I trust someday there will be answers to our questions. But until then, I am so thankful for my ever-present Compassionate Friends!

With gentle thoughts,

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



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)**

Being Public Takes Its Toll

*When one is pretending, the entire body revolts.
(Anais Nin)*

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

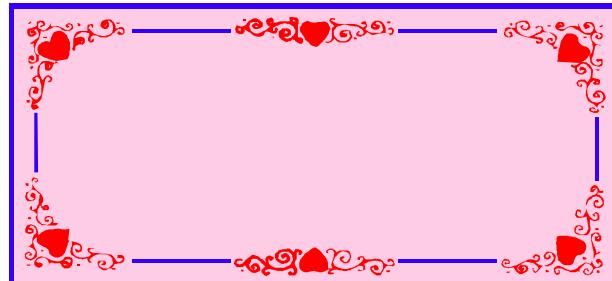
All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body - in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the impulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flues as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.

**Carol Staudacher
From A Time to Grieve**

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



*This newsletter is printed
through the generosity of
The Copy Stop
Milford, MA*

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."