



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

December 2023

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. You are not alone in your grief.

Meetings are held the 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday of each month via Zoom Online at 7:00PM. We also hold an in-person meeting on the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 235 Park Street, North Reading at 7:00 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join us at a meeting.

Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

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The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
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PH: 630-990-0010
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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, 1/2/24 - 7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

(Email invitation to follow)

You may also contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com
to request an invitation

Topic: Facing a New Year

Wednesday - 1/17/24 - 7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

(Email invitation to follow)

You may also contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com
to request an invitation

Topic: Open Sharing Session

-and-

Sibling Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM

(Email invitation to follow)

You may also contact Aimeeb15@gmail.com
if you would like to participate

Topic: Learning to Socialize After a Death

Wednesday - 1/24/24 - 7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

Please contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com

if you would like to attend

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Chapter Leader: David Paul
tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com

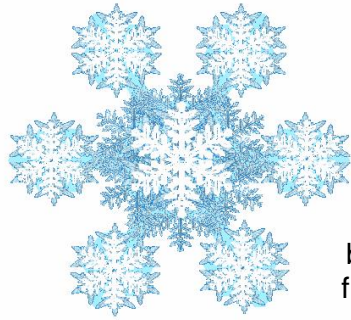
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JILLIAN ANNE SULLIVAN
Dear Jillian,
I love and miss you so much.
Recently I am remembering
the joy you had playing in the fall leaves
on a beautiful sunny day
and it reminds me to appreciate
moments of joy in this life.
Losing you to this life crushed me
but through my continued connection to you,
finding community who understands my pain,
and by the grace of God, I got up again.
I walk each day knowing I am not alone
and each step brings me closer to you.

Love, Mom

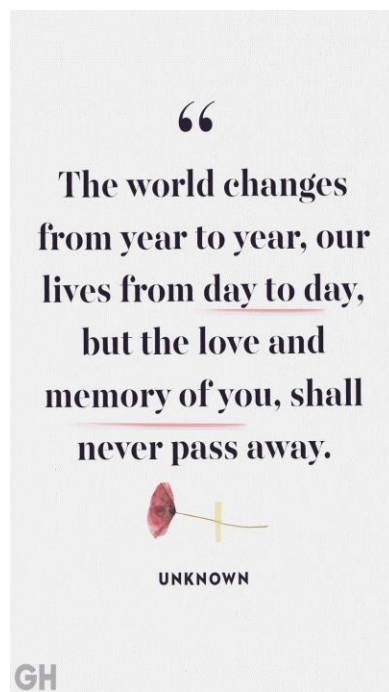
-and-

JULIA FORMAN
In memory of our beautiful Julia:
If I should go tomorrow
It would never be goodbye.
For I have left my heart with you,
So don't you ever cry.
The love that's deep within me,
Shall reach you from the stars,
You'll feel it from the heavens,
And it will heal the scars.



Love,

Mom, Bob, Josh, Brie, Claire and Evie



A Christmas Poem for those who Grieve

Contributed by: MaryJo Zacher – Director of Pastoral Care, OSF Home Care Services

Christmas Desiderata for Those Who Grieve

Go peacefully amid the Christmas craziness and rushing, and remember that you do not have to participate at anyone else's pace but your own.
As far as possible, without giving away a piece of who you are, be on good terms with those who matter to you. Speak of your grief quietly and clearly and whenever you feel like it. Allow others to listen to you and tell your story again and again.
Stay away from those who drain you and be with those who give you a sense of peace.
If you compare your grief with the grief of others you may become faltering and discouraged for there will always be people in different stages of grief. Know that YOU are where YOU need to be for YOU.
Enjoy your small steps of success along the path of grief. You have worked hard to attain each one.
Keep interested in your own plans and your own life.
Exercise caution in activities and traditions. Take care of yourself and be good to yourself. Set time limits on outings and events. Accomplish a few things and then rest. You heroically survived a death, you can heroically survive the holiday.
Be yourself. Cry when you feel like crying. Talk about your loved one when you are so moved. If "the world" can't handle a name or a memory, then the world will have to learn ... as you are learning. Don't be bitter when someone talks of love. Love is still a rare and precious gift.
Listen, if you are able, to those of us who are farther down the road in our grief. We walked where you are now walking. We remember that searing intense pain. It has gotten better for us. It will get better for you as well.
Nurture yourself. Take a break from all the "why's" and "what if's".
Fatigue and loneliness are not your friends. Reach for peacefulness and some time alone.
Be gentle with yourself. You are a survivor of the death of a loved one. You can survive anything.
Therefore, be at peace with yourself and with your God, whoever you believe God is. In the noisy confusion of the holiday season strive to be at peace with yourself. In spite of all that you have faced, it is still a beautiful world.

Wounded Holidays

by Alan Harris

Dedicated to the Compassionate Friends

and all who are grieving the loss of a child

Young, they left our homes.
In a moment, long or quick,
they were gone.

Dewdrops turned into teardrops,
the shining sea too small
to hold our grief.

"Give us our children back," we pled
as we noticed their plateless places
at the table.

Regret made a river through our days,
tempering laughter,
pervading sudden silences.

Bodies they had through us, with us--
bodies housing minds and souls--
no longer.

The holiday season's return
makes throb now the wounds
we felt at their parting,

wounds which may heal
in time, we hope,
into strength--

but not yet, in this season
of snowflakes that sting and cookies
that somehow taste of vinegar.

"If only," goes our carol.
If only they could return to us--
but no.

If only
we could speak with them--
but no.

If only we could love them
so intensely that they could
feel our presence right now--

but yes, yes to this one,
a thousand yesses--
they can.

How can they not feel our love,



being core in core with us,
heart in heart?

We give love this season to them and
to each other as plundered parents
and wounded healers.

With love flowing, something in our lives--
a magnificent, mysterious Something--
guides us like a star.

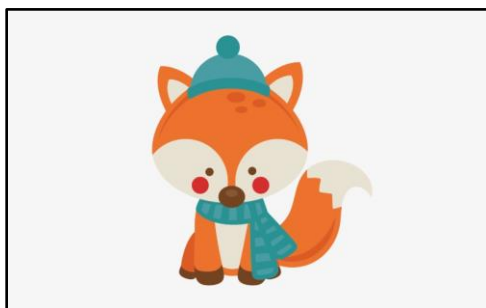
Tips for this New Year

Even years later, the reflective nature of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day can bring back intense emotions. This can be time of year when well-meaning people might think they are helping when they tell you, "It's been long enough." Or, "You'll feel better." So you don't have to feel bad for turning down an invitation that reminds you that your loved one didn't live to see this new year. Only you can know your grief, and only you can decide how to get through it. If being with revelers as they ring in the new year sounds dreadfully painful, take a pass on it this year.

Give yourself permission to celebrate however feels right to you, and include your loved one's memory if you can. You may want to take time on your own to review your last year: the pain, the laughter, the lessons, and the gifts. Make a list of all you experienced, then light a candle, say a prayer, or pour you and your loved one a drink for an honorary toast to the future.

If you do go out, make sure your fellow revelers are supportive of you and understand the complicated emotions the night may bring.

If you do choose to celebrate, make sure it's with people who understand that New Year's is bittersweet for you, at best—and that you may need to step outside or even leave at some point.




 **December Birthdays**

Joel Wesley Lindquist son of Roy and Mariann Lindquist
Jonathan Corey son of Reenie McCormack and Ron Corey
Michael John Smithers son of Marnie Smithers & sibling of Chanel Powers
Nicholas Ryan Amirault son of Rick & JoAnne Amirault
Penney Richards daughter of Dave & Penny Richards
Emily Anne Driscoll daughter of David F. Driscoll and Rosanne Benedetto Driscoll
Deirdre Helene Olson daughter of Catherine E.B. Olson
Charlee Charette Daughter of Christopher and Samantha Charette
Joey Domenici son of Carla Domenici
Jillian Anne Sullivan daughter of Jacqueline Sullivan
Thomas Hart (Tom) Pope son of Carmen and Jeff Pope
David John Santucci son of John & Marie Santucci
Andi Maree Payne daughter of John Payne
Ethan Costello son of Kelly Costello
Nicholas Sean Carey son of Linda Calandrella
Tom Alfieri son of Diane Alfieri
Dakota Thomas son of Jeanne Mace and brother of Lauren Steeves
Raymond Moyette and Dennis Costa siblings of Alice and Gil Costa
Jason Dube son of Eileen Rosato
Ian Byrnes son of Julie and Geoff Moore

 **December Angel Dates**

Andrew W. Taylor son of Constance Taylor
Joey Bolivar son of Reggie and Cindi Bolivar
Eric Howard Krasker son of Barry and Cheryl Krasker
Catherine Cann daughter of Anna Bourque
Ethan Henry Lamphier son of Regan and Bill Lamphier
Nathaniel (Nate) Doiron son of Stacey & Linus Doiron, grandson of Dorothy Molley
Andi Maree Payne daughter of John Payne
Amanda L Dick daughter of Kathy Nelson
Ashley St Onge daughter of Rick and Chris St. Onge
Darcie Forrestall daughter of Sally and Tim Morse
Max Durham son of Andre and Mary Durham
Peter Thomas son of Jeanne Mace and brother of Lauren Steeves
Julia Ann Forman daughter of Patricia & Robert Powell
Daria Elise Pearlman daughter of Jill Pearlman
Kaleigh Rainone daughter of Colleen and Dean Jaynes



	<p>Our telephone friends are here to help you if you feel the need to connect with someone outside of our usual meeting night. We are not professionals – we are all bereaved parents seeking to find a way through our grief.</p> <p>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.</p>	
Beverly	Carmen Pope, son, 3 days, anencephaly; son, 11, boating accident	978-998-4087
Reading	Sheila Thabet, son, 19, Pedestrian accident, Son 20, accidental overdose	781-670-0335
Gloucester	Melinda & David Paul, daughter, 20, sudden cardiac arrest	978-771-6345
Haverhill	Crystal Chambers, sibling, 28, cause unknown	508-523-2810
North Andover	Catherine Olson, daughter, 27, pedestrian accident	978-681-8341
Salem, NH	Regan Burke, son, 8, pneumonia/cardiac arrest	603-264-9391
Winchester	Reenie McCormack, son, 20, drowning	781-729-1878
Woburn	Nancy Whipple, son, 22 months, cancer	781-938-5840

TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter Website Sponsorship

In order to help cover our chapter website fees, we invite our members to sponsor our chapter website for 1 month in memory of their children, grandchildren or siblings. The monthly website sponsor donation is \$25 per member and the maximum number of sponsors per month is 2. Sponsors may post a message to their children, grandchildren or siblings; this message will be displayed in the Website Sponsor column on the Home page of our website and will also appear in our chapter newsletter.

If you would like to sponsor our chapter website, please contact our Website Manager via email: tcfnoshoreweb@gmail.com

Website sponsor sign-up sheets are also available at our monthly in-person meetings.



HOLIDAY GRIEF SURVIVAL TIP:
MAKE NEW RITUALS

The holidays – your traditions and your rituals – don't have to look like what they used to be. Rituals are living things, they shift and change, just as life does.

Allow yourself to let go of both expectation and tradition, because this is not a normal time. Your rituals can—and maybe should—reflect your new reality.

@REFUGEINGRIEF #RIGGRIEFTIPS



HOLIDAY GRIEF SURVIVAL TIP:
CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

Not just for events and gatherings, but for every single moment of life: check in with yourself.

Take a minute to breathe, one good inhale/exhale, and ask yourself how you're doing. Ask yourself what you need. Maybe you need to leave right now. Or maybe you feel like you can put your emotional blinders on and push through.

Give yourself what you need in that moment.

@REFUGEINGRIEF #RIGGRIEFTIPS

*My grief is tremendous,
but my love is bigger.
So is yours.*

-Cheryl Strayed-



Love Notes



In Memory of Donald Tottingham,

In loving memory of my son Don at Christmas.

And

In loving memory of my wife Roberta at Christmas

Malcolm Tottingham

In loving memory of Erik

Merry Christmas. In loving memory of my son Erik Sean Rakos.



This section is reserved for personal messages in memory of our children, grandchildren, and siblings. Donations received help to cover the operating costs of the chapter; monthly meetings, refreshments, newsletter mailing, etc. While not expected, any donations are always appreciated.

Thank you to all who continue to leave donations in the box at every meeting

Love Notes are a way to share a message in memory of your child/grandchild/sibling. Donations received with Love notes help with the cost of publication of this newsletter.

Please send your Love Notes with donation by mail to

Bob Boulanger, 42 Chatham Rd. Billerica, MA 01821, or give them to the leader at the monthly meetings.

Please use the form below to assure notes are posted exactly as you want them. Love Notes for the next newsletter must be received by the **15th of the previous month**.

Love Gifts for future dates may be sent at any time; month to be published: _____

Love Gift from _____ In memory of

Message:

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. 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 that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different, we really do understand. You are not alone.

TO OUR SEASONED MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back.... remember hearing from others farther along than you...“your pain will not always be this bad it really does get better” Come to the meetings and share your wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
c/o Bob Boulanger
42 Chatham Road
Billerica, MA 01821



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIALS
PLEASE FORWARD



The Compassionate Friends
North Shore-Boston Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

NEWSLETTER – December 2023



National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

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

***** CHAPTER WEBSITE: www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org *****

Help us save money and paper.....

To receive these newsletters via email please send an email to the editor
tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com