



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *North Shore-Boston Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

Newsletter

May 2020

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 1<sup>st</sup> Monday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month** at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 235 Park Street, North Reading at 7:30 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with 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.*

**National Office:  
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.  
P. O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696  
Toll-free: 877-969-0010  
PH: 630-990-0010  
FAX: 630-990-0246**

[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

**Wednesday - 5/20/20**

**ONLINE VIDEO MEETING - 7:30 PM**

***(Email invitation to follow)***

You may also contact [tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com)  
-and-

**SIBLING ONLINE VIDEO MEETING – 7:30pm**

***(Email invitation to follow)***

You may also contact [aimeeb15@gmail.com](mailto:aimeeb15@gmail.com)

Chapter Leader: David Paul 978-771-6345  
[tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Eden Paul and Regan Lamphier 603-264-9391  
[tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com)



The North Shore-Boston Chapter website is sponsored this month in loving memory of:

#### **GEORGE SILVA**

Happy Heavenly Birthday George,

We want you to know  
that you are always  
in our thoughts and  
forever in our hearts.

We love you.

Mom, Bob, Gustavo,  
Aimee and Family



## Message on COVID-19

During this period of reduced gatherings, our chapter meetings at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church in North Reading will be cancelled until we can safely and effectively resume them. In the meantime, we will be holding Online Video Meetings. The next Online Video Meeting will be held at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, May 20th. We will be sending an email asking whether you are interested in participating. By responding back Yes to this email you will then be emailed an invitation to the online meeting. You can also ask for an invitation by emailing [tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com) to let us know that you would like to participate.

In addition to our online chapter meetings, other support options are listed below:

1) **TCF Live Chats:** The National TCF website offers scheduled Live Chat sessions on different days and with different topics. The details can be found here:

[National TCF Live Chat Schedule](#)

2) **Private Facebook Groups:** TCF offers several private Facebook groups facilitated by bereaved parents, grandparents or siblings. They can be accessed here:

[TCF Private Facebook Groups](#)

3) **TCF North Shore-Boston Facebook Page:** Our chapter has its own Facebook page that is active with members from our chapter. You can access it here:

[TCF North Shore-Boston Facebook Page](#)

We will plan to resume our usual meetings as soon as it is feasible. While there is no substitute for our actual meetings, we will continue to do our best to offer ongoing support.

Adapted from the new bestseller, “**Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child**”

By Gary Roe

### **Grief Identity Crisis: Who Are We Now?**

“I’m not the same person. Neither is Dave. Who am I now? Who are we?” asked Alexandra.

Alexandra and Dave’s son Duke was their only child. He was a talkative kid, with an active imagination. He was the superhero of the neighborhood, with a strong preference for Batman and Thor.

Despite watchful and involved parents, Duke began to run with a questionable crowd. In high school, he got into drugs. He pursued some college, but never followed through consistently. He had trouble holding down a job. One morning, Duke’s roommate found him unconscious on the floor. His death was ruled an accidental overdose. Duke was 25.

“Duke’s death was complicated. So is our grief. I miss him. I miss me. I miss our family,” Alexandra shared.

Loss can create an identity crisis. Some losses strike us at the core of our beings. Part of us has been suddenly, perhaps forcefully, stolen away. Where did they go?

Their absence changes everything - every dynamic, every relationship. Their death hits our hearts and souls. We feel ourselves changing. The person we were, along with the life and family we knew, has been altered forever. Who are we now?

This can throw us into an identity crisis. Part of us has disappeared. What do we do with that? Like waves on a beach, the unwanted changes keep rolling in, continual and relentless. The after-shocks pound us. Collateral damage piles up. Who knew so many little deaths could come from one big one?

Our hearts are stunned. We’re reeling. It feels like we’re in a free fall with no safety net. We brace ourselves and wonder what will happen next. We go into fortress-mode, trying desperately to control the damage and protect who and what we have left.

We sense our hearts and lives changing, shifting. We hold our breath, hoping that all this will soon stop and be over somehow. We have dreams about the way things were.

We gaze into the mirror. Who is that? We look different. We are different. Perhaps we barely recognize ourselves. This identity crisis is a natural and common experience for those suffering a heavy loss. Weathering this storm takes guts. We’re in uncharted waters with almost no idea where this violent wind might drive us.

In most cases, this identity crisis will be temporary. As we process the grief, we will adapt, adjust, heal, and grow (though any and all of these might seem impossible on any given day). But we will not go back to who we were. That’s impossible. We walk now with a pronounced limp. Every step reminds us of the shattering blow we’ve experienced.

Who are we? Who will we be? We don’t know. But we’re not the same, and we won’t be. “I don’t know who I am or who I’ll become, but I’ll never be the same. I don’t want to be.”

## Thoughts about Mother's Day

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

As a child, Mother's Day was an important occasion to my family. My dad always insisted we wear the traditional carnations: white if one's mother was deceased, red if still living. He would make a special trip to the florist to purchase them. We would attend church, and then drive to a nearby city for lunch.

I remember clearly my first Mother's Day being "the mom." Our Anna was only about three weeks old, so I had a very limited idea of what it really meant to be "the mom." But I do remember being treated like a queen and enjoying every minute of it.

Over the next several years as we raised our two daughters, my husband continued to affirm the women of our family. On Mother's Day he always bought roses for each of his girls. Anna would get a yellow one. Debbie would get a peach-colored one. The red roses were for me. When the girls were young I would receive and treasure their hand-made cards. As they grew into young adults, their choices in purchased cards were just as significant. Every year as Mother's Day approached, we looked forward again to spending the day together as a family. We would attend church, go out for my favorite brunch, have lots of conversation, fill our bellies to the max, laugh until we cried, be silly, make memories... That was before...

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

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

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

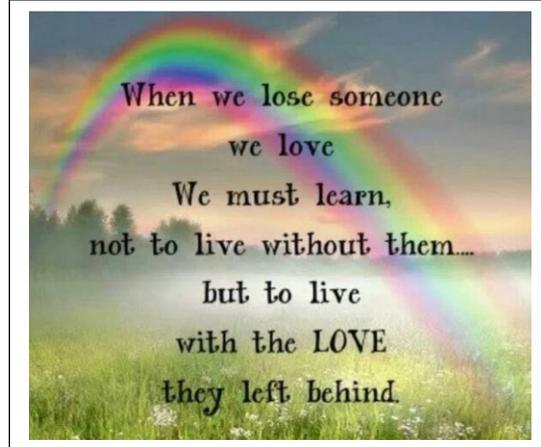
- Realize this day is full of potential for a multitude of feelings to sneak up on you and catch you by surprise.
- Especially during those early years, do whatever works for you. This may be a time of being in "survival mode." Trying to please everyone else can cause undue stress.
- If you have surviving children who want to honor you, communicate your feelings to them. Let them know that while you are grieving the death of their brother or sister, you still love them.
- Try to keep things simple and uncomplicated.
- Visit the cemetery.
- You may choose to pretend the day just does not exist and do something completely unrelated to Mother's Day. Clean the house, take a nap, get out of town. One of my Compassionate Friends spends Mother's Day at Home Depot. No one bothers her there or mentions Mother's Day.
- Have a good cry. If you have trouble crying, just stop by a card shop and read a card or two. Maybe even buy the card that you believe your child would give you.
- Go to the recycle bin and break glass into the proper receptacle.
- Know that the days before the holiday may be worse than the actual day.

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

Paula Funk  
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI  
In loving memory of my daughter, Anna

**TIME DOES  
NOT BRING RELIEF**  
By Edna St Vincent Millay

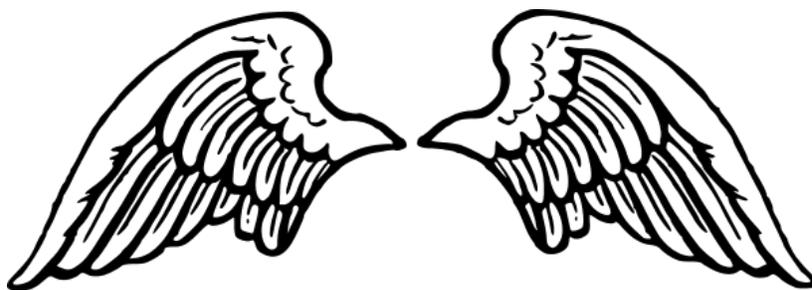
Time does not bring relief; you all have lied  
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!  
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;  
I want him at the shrinking of the tide;  
The old snows melt from every mountain-side,  
And last year's leaves are smoke in every lane;  
But last year's bitter love must remain  
Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.  
There are a hundred places where I fear  
To go – so with his memory they brim.  
And entering with relief to some quiet place  
Where never fell his foot or shone his face  
I say, 'There is no memory of him here!'  
And so stand stricken, so remembering him.



*Our Children Remembered*



- Tyler Weymouth Sibling of Andrew Weymouth  
Benjamin Clark son of Nancy Wescott  
George Silva son/stepson of Ester and Bob Boulanger, Sibling of Aimee Gordon  
Eric Howard Krasker son of Barry and Cheryl Krasker  
Jennifer Margot Jacob daughter of Claudette Jacob  
Ryan Liam Teague son of Susan Teague  
Jennifer Gianocostas daughter of Skip Gianocostas and stepdaughter of Diane Gianocostas  
Christopher Burke son of Dotty and David Burke  
Madigan Drummond daughter of David Drummond  
Corey Noel son of Gary Noel  
SPC David Mulno son of Cathy and Harry Mulno  
Kara Lynne Irving daughter of Jean and Jerry Irving  
Patrick Barry son of Joanne Barry  
Olivia Mary Marchand daughter of Jody Marchand  
Jaxton Donais nephew of Kayla Welch  
Amber Zapatka Daughter of Lise and Ed Zapatka  
Sarah Nicoll Boyle daughter of Jackie and Mark Nicoll  
Bobby Moore son of Jeff Moore  
Eric Joshua Smith son of Stacey and Bill Smith  
Courtney Marie Corning daughter of Ginny & Jack Corning  
Steven Kaminski son of Joanne Kaminski



**May Angel Dates**



Deacon Winslow Harris son of Debra Glabeau  
Eric Joshua Smith son of Stacey and Bill Smith  
Jason Michael Sobanek Son of Karen Cioffi  
Conor Bates son of Eileen Bates  
Wendy Kagan Snyder daughter of Billie and Sumner Kagan  
Sheryl Lynn Becker daughter of Millie & Jerry Becker  
Tritan James Rice son of Brian Rice  
Nicole Hufnagle daughter of Janet and Gary Hufnagle  
Julian Cayer son of Matt & Lauren Cayer  
Alyssa Lynne Nanopoulos daughter of Andrew & Nancy Nanopoulos  
Maxwell O'Hanlon son of Brady and Kim O'Hanlon  
Brittany Lynn McCauley Daughter of Nancy and Patrick McCauley

As a regular feature, the newsletter is used to acknowledge the Birthdays and Anniversaries of the death of our children/siblings at the request of parents/siblings. Permission must be given for us to print your child's name. For privacy reasons we do not print dates. You only need to give permission once and we will keep it on record.

Childs Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Angel Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send to:** David Paul 48 Castle View Dr, Gloucester, MA 01930

**Note:** If your child's information is missing or not correct please send the correct data to be posted in the next edition to: [tfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tfnoshorenews@gmail.com)

	<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><b>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.</b></p>	
Beverly	Carmen Pope, son, 3 days, anencephaly; son, 11, boating accident	978-998-4087
Malden	Marnie Smithers, son, 13, ATV Accident	781-322-1722
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 Spring Event**  
*"A Garden For Our Children"*

\*\*\*Spring Event\*\*\* POSTPONED

The TCF North Shore-Boston Spring Event, *A GARDEN FOR OUR CHILDREN*, was scheduled to be held on Monday, June 1st at 6:30pm at the Aldersgate United Methodist Church, North Reading. However, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, this event will be delayed until further notice. The plan is to gather to plant flowers in memory of our children in a garden at the entrance of the church. A flower will be provided to each family in memory of their child, grandchild or sibling. The plantings will be organized by our TCF volunteers.

***\*\*\*Information regarding this event will be posted on the TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter Website, Facebook Page and Newsletter. Please stay posted for future updates.***



Love Notes

In Memory of SPC David Mulno his birthdate: May 6, 1989,

You're no longer on this earth but will be in our hearts forever. We miss you every single day.

Love, Mom, Dad and Alyssa

*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 02821**, 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 – May 2020**



National Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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](http://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](mailto:tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com)