



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

September 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 1st Monday and 3rd 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.

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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings

9/08/20

Tuesday

Online Video Meeting

Email tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate

9/16/20

Online Video Meeting

Email tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate

-and-

Sibling Online Video Meeting

Email Aimeeb15@gmail.com if you would like to participate

9/27/20

WALK TO REMEMBER & TREE DEDICATION

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Ipswich River Park

15 Central Street, North Reading MA

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tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com

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tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com

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dgctcf@aol.com

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

GLENN WARREN BUTTRICK

Try

By Lillian S. Burton Perry

*Try hard to give others encouragement,
 Each day from morn to night.
 Tomorrow is another day,
 It will soon pass from sight.
 Try to give inspiration
 To all you meet whose spirit is down.
 You may not live to see them inspired,
 But they will always remember you have been around.
 Try hard to let others know you love them,
 Through your expression and what you say,
 You may not live to say it tomorrow,
 But remember you have said it today.*

For your birthday, Glenn,
 I love you always,
 Mom

There is before and there is after

By

Maile Madigan, Lia's mother

The night before, snuggling with Lia on the couch, I can still feel the imprint of her against my chest. That day, she played happily with her brother, laughing often, bringing us joy as we watched our little one grow. I delighted in moments when she looked deep into my eyes and broke into an ecstatic smile that melted my heart. When the quiet of the evening settled in, I held her peacefully, her tiny hand grasping mine as she slept. I felt unconditional love, the powerful love that is unique between parent and child, maybe specifically between mother and daughter. I never wanted to let go.

The morning before, I kissed Lia goodbye and told her I love her. I walked out the door without remembering the details. It wasn't supposed to be significant. Just a random Thursday. It shouldn't have been the last time I saw my daughter.

The call came from daycare. The moment everything changed. Is she breathing? Is her heart beating? They wouldn't tell me. Just go to the hospital, they said. I don't remember thinking or feeling. Heat coursed through my body, blinded by fear. I need to see my daughter. Lia lying on the hospital bed in only her diaper. Her pink polka dot shirt cut open. Her tiny hands peeking out. Doctors trying to resuscitate her. Chest compressions. Pumping air into her lungs. Trying to restart her heart. I let myself hope. I have never wanted anything in my life as desperately as I wanted her to be alive in that moment. The heart monitor remained flat. The doctor in front of me. We tried everything. He looked at the clock. Time of death 3:21pm.

Tubes disappeared. People left the room. Lia was in my arms. A knit blanket wrapped around her as I moved her towards me. A chair behind me as I stepped forward. I sank into it. Lia's cheek against my chest, her soft skin touching mine. Still warm but not as warm as she should be. I held her hand. She didn't hold back. Holding my baby girl in my arms for hours. Whispering I love you. Time passing without my knowledge. This tiny girl had been perfect. So full of laughter and joy and peace. I didn't wonder why this would happen until later. In that moment I was just with her. Dan held her one last time. I glimpsed pain on his face that must have been reflected in mine. We said I'm sorry. We are her parents. It was our job to protect her. To keep her alive. We failed. I'm so sorry we couldn't keep you safe.

I lay Lia on the bed. So small with the blanket falling to her sides. We left her there alone and walked away.

Holding our son in our arms we told him, "Lia died. She's in heaven. She's never coming back." His baby sister and best friend who he loved with all his heart was gone.

As though grief and life without our child wasn't enough, the waves kept coming, pushing us under every time we came up for air. Hospital bills. News reporters. Unwarranted investigation of the daycare. A letter from the ambulance company addressed to Lia asking her about her experience in their ambulance. Donating heart valves. Receiving a death certificate. Planning a funeral.

There were people who demonstrated tremendous care and empathy through those unbearable days: the cremator charging half price because Lia was so small, the detective assuring us that she received the highest level of care at daycare, the print shop owner who gave us the funeral programs for free, the friends and family who sat by our sides and slept on our floor, and brought food, hugs, broken hearts, plasticware, gifts for our son, help finding therapists, memories of our daughter, a shoulder to cry on, grapefruit seltzer, toilet paper, books written by grieving parents. Taking out trash when I was unable to see that trash even existed. Allowing me to repeat myself when my brain was too fuzzy to remember what I had said. Holding me when my body hurt physically as much as emotionally. Listening to me desperately scream "why?" without trying to provide an answer. Asking about Lia's short life. Giving me space to talk about the horror of her death. Acknowledging our pain.

Eventually, slowly but also too quickly, they went back to their lives, to a world that was still spinning for them while we were left to figure out how to keep living with shattered hearts. I got angry. Really angry. Flipping tables at Dunkin Donuts angry. I lost hope because hope had done nothing to save my daughter. I went numb with shock. I remember only tiny snapshots of the early months. Just as I started to understand that Lia was truly gone, the many other layers of loss began to show themselves. I lost who I am as a mother, wife, sister, daughter, friend, teacher, community member. Who I was, forever changed.

Somehow, we learned to pretend to be ok because that's what the world expected of us or because it was easier than trying to explain or defend our feelings in response to the foolish attempts others made to try to fix the unfixable. I share my pain on the big dates- the birth and death dates. But most moments I hold privately, my heart screaming silently amidst the chaos of the world around me. Cherishing memories of the beach or the zoo. I think about what was and I think about all that should have been. Wondering who she would have become. Hopes and dreams of our future. Emptiness fills space where she should be.

Two years is a short time in a grieving parent's journey, but it feels like an eternity of pain and suffering. Desperate to find others who survived the unimaginable. Discovering TCF, space to share openly without fear of others shrinking away, space where you understand and know my pain. You told us that the pain changes with time but never goes away. It was hard to believe that it would ever shift but it has. I believe you now. I still get knocked to my knees when a memory unexpectedly hits me, but I know how to stand up again until the next wave comes.

I gave birth to another daughter. A child who will never know more than pictures and stories of the sister who came before her. The arrival of Lia's little sister has brought laughter into our home but with it also comes a resurgence of sadness. No child can ever replace another. This new child is wonderful. She is also an ever-present reminder that our family will never be whole. Lia's absence will always be felt in our hearts.

...

On A Father's Grief: My Heart Is Equally Broken by Roger Smith

As a man, a father, a husband, I felt that it was my duty to protect, defend, and do the difficult things for my family that no one else wanted to do.

When my son died, I stuffed much of my emotions down because I felt I had to be the one to take care of the arrangements.

My family needed time to grieve; I would be strong for them. But grief has a life of its own and will not allow itself to be ignored.

Increasingly, I felt tears filling my eyes for no apparent reason. I began having difficulty concentrating, trouble sleeping.

It felt as if my body was betraying me, not allowing me to do the things that needed to get done.

I began searching for information about grieving the loss of a child. Much of what I found was geared toward mothers.

Precious little spoke to a father's heart, or should I say the father's shattered heart.

Slowly, I realized that I needed to acknowledge the hole in my chest where my heart used to be.

I imagined nothing there but a shattered heap of brokenness. How was I supposed to be there for my family if I couldn't keep it together myself?

It was my wife who spoke softly to me to care for myself, as well as everyone else. They needed me to be strong but also vulnerable, not something easy for most men to do.

As I slowly let my guard down, I began to feel a rush of emotions that initially frightened me.

Now I realize that it was weeks of bottled up feelings that were going to come out. I cried most days, no, I cried every day.

I held the tools that he used, imagining his hands holding onto them, where my hands now touched.

I kept a shirt of his that I wear occasionally. It feels as though he and I are hugging each other.

Now the funeral is over, the headstone paid for, no more "arrangements" to plan.

Now I go to his grave and speak gently to him about what his children are doing, how they are growing, and I cry.

I cry for my loss, the children's loss, his loss, for memories that will never be made. I am still there for my family in any way they need me to be.

I still hold my wife close when she is hurting; I still talk with my grandchildren, his children, about their dad.

But it's different now.

Now they see me as someone who is grieving alongside them, someone whose heart is equally broken. Someone who will forever be changed.

I miss her all the time. I know in my head that she has gone. the only difference is that I am getting used to the pain. It's like discovering a great hole in the ground. To begin with, you forget it's there and keep falling in. After a while, it's still there, but you learn to walk round it.

Rachel Joyce

PICTUREQUOTES.COM

"We are never finished with grief. It is part of the fabric of living. It is always waiting to happen. Love makes memories and life precious; the grief that comes to us is proportionate to that love and is inescapable..."

Our Children Remembered



Robert Joseph Biondo son of Lorraine & Robert Biondo
Joey Bolivar son of Reggie and Cindi Bolivar
Derek Anthony Broughton son of Edward and Louise Broughton
Jessica Cormier daughter of Walter Cormier and Barbara Melesciuc
Bryan Robert Cadigan son of Debbie Daly
Kelly Dawkins Lavigne daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins
Shane Lambert grandson of Irene Lambert
Erik Sean Rakos son of Frances Rakos
Glenn Buttrick son of Heidi Scott
Marquis Bergendahl son of Pauline and Chris Whynot
Michael Sverdlove son of Harry and Grace Sverdlove
Scott Peterson son of Tim and Parry Peterson
Peter Costas son of Barbara Costas, sibling of Alainie Costas
Nicholas Charles Erbafina, son of Susan and Charles Erbafina sibling of Jackie ERbafina
Ryan Sherman Loughlin son of Cynthia Loughflin
Alyssa Rose Conte daughter of Janice and David Conte
Kyra Grace Koman daughter of Kathy and Stu Koman
Ashley St Onge daughter of Rick and Chris St Onge
Victor DeMacedo son of Patricia Dos Santos
Aderson James Elam son of Lynette Elam



James Vincent Barreira son of Susan Barreira
Nicholas Alden Chittick son of Joann Chittick
Alfredo Alexis Trejo son of Alfredo and Lilliam Trejo
Kelly Dawkins Lavigne daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins
Harrison Andrew Lambert son of Gregory and Sigrid Lambert
Aaron DiBella son of Suzanne DiBella
Lia Madigan daughter of Maile and Daniel Madigan
Sarah Nicoll Boyle daughter of Jackie and Mark Nicoll
Mark Jepson sister of Shannon Kaiser
Daniel Edwards brother of Rebecca Edwards
Timothy Glendinning son of Tim and Barbara Glendinning
Brendan Burgess son of Catherine and Bill Burgess
Dillon Patrick Dwyer son of Wayne Dwyer
Benjamin Clark son of Nancy Wescott
Michael Glionna son of Terry Glionna
Lindsey Dias daughter of Bruce Dias
Joshua Williams son of Donna Williams
Gregory Stames son of Donna Bouley
AJ Ryan son of Shirley Loranger
Jillian Sullivan daughter of Jacqueline Sullivan

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: tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com

	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. Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.	
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

OUR STORIES

Once again, we are offering parents, siblings, and grandparents an opportunity to share their story in our monthly newsletter. You can write your story from whatever perspective you choose. If you are interested in writing and submitting your story please email your story or any questions about "Our Stories" to tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com. We ask that you keep your submission to 700 words or less. We typically have space for a couple of stories per newsletter so we will publish them in order of receipt.

A New Way to Donate to the North Shore – Boston Chapter

With the introduction of our new website we have added the ability to donate to our chapter via the website in three different ways: A Love note, Website Sponsorship, or a General Donation. It can be accessed at our website or by clicking here: [TCF North Shore-Boston Donation Page](#)



Love Notes



In Loving Memory of
Michael John Smithers
 12/06/89 - 8/22/03



Somehow 17 years have passed.
 We continue to keep your memory
 part of our lives. Even though
 we are able to enjoy life again,
 the void of your presence will
 always be there and will forever
 be felt. We cherish our memories
 of you and hope we see you again
 someday. Those fortunate enough
 to have known Michael,
 please think of him today.
 We miss you more than anything,
 and **I LOVE YOU MOST!**
Mum & Chanel.

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: _____



**TCF North Shore-Boston
WALK TO REMEMBER & TREE DEDICATION CEREMONY
Sunday, September 27, 2020
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Ipswich River Park
15 Central Street North Reading, MA**

On **Sunday, September 27th**, we are holding the North Shore-Boston Chapter's 5th annual **Walk to Remember & Tree Dedication Ceremony** at the Ipswich River Park in North Reading. The Ceremony will start at 10:00AM and the Walk will begin at 10:30 AM and end at 1:00 PM. Participants are welcome to bring their own picnic lunch. The chapter will provide bottled water. Due to State regulations **we are limited to 50 participants** so attendees will be limited to the first 50 participants who register. We request people limit group to a maximum of 4 people per family due the numbers restriction.

To **register** for the **Walk to Remember**, please visit our website at tcfnorthshore-boston.org. **Registration fee is \$15 per person, but children under the age of 12 may participate for free.**

*If you are unable to participate in the **Walk to Remember** but would like to contribute to the fundraiser you can select the donate button on our website.*

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 – September 2020



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