



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

May 2021

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 7:30PM. 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 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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The Compassionate Friends
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PH: 630-990-0010
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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, 5/19/21 7:30 PM	Online Video Meeting - Please contact tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate Topic: Open Sharing Session Facilitators: TBD -and- Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - Please contact Aimeeb15@gmail.com if you would like to participate Topic: When People Ask, "How's Your Mother?"
Wednesday, 5/26/21 7:00 - 8:30 PM	In-Person Meeting (meeting will be limited to 15 participants) Please contact tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to attend Topic: Facing Missed Milestones Facilitators: Tim & Dave
TBD	SPRING EVENT
Monday, 6/7/21 7:30 PM	Online Video Meeting - Please contact tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate Topic: Open Sharing Session Facilitators: TBD
Wednesday, 6/16/21 7:30 PM	Online Video Meeting - Please contact tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate Topic: Open Sharing Session Facilitators: TBD -and- Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - Please contact Aimeeb15@gmail.com if you would like to participate Topic: Dealing With the "What If's?"
Wednesday, 6/23/21 7:00 - 8:30 PM	In-Person Meeting (meeting will be limited to 15 participants) Please contact tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to attend Topic: From Shock to Grief to Reinvestment in Life Facilitators: Kelley & Dave

Chapter Leader: David Paul tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com	978-771-6345
Newsletter Editors: Eden Paul and Regan Lamphier tcfnorthshorenews@gmail.com	603-264-9391
Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle dgctcf@aol.com	978-532-2736

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

ERIC JOSHUA SMITH
You will always be
in my heart
Mom

-and-

GEORGE SILVA
Happy Birthday in Heaven,
George,
We love you and miss you
very much.
Love, Mom, Bob,
Gustavo, Aimee and family



Who Am I?



Written by Clara Hinton

Following the death of a young child everything changes. Probably the most significant changes that occur come from within the heart of a grieving parent. A parent will often feel so strangely different that the question will be asked time and time again, “Who am I?”

Obvious changes take place in the home when a child dies. Where there were four dinner plates at the table, there are now three. When riding in the car to run errands, one seat remains quiet and empty. There aren’t as many jeans and dirty socks piled up in the laundry each week.

Grocery shopping becomes painfully different. In fact, it is almost unbearable to walk down the aisles in the supermarket that contained all of the “favorites”. Watching other parents with their children walking through the store choosing favorite snacks and school lunch foods becomes too painful to bear. No longer are the everyday routines of life “routine”. Even looking at the cereal boxes in the cupboard brings a flood of salty tears.

Losing a young child changes so much! Even the way we see things is so very different. We notice more details now than before our child died. We notice things like hair color and the hair length of other children. We notice the color of other children’s eyes, and we remember how many teeth they are missing when they smile. We pay attention to the way a child talks, and we notice such things as whether or not there is a lisp. Before our child died, we were so busy that these little things passed by totally unnoticed. Now, the big things don’t seem to matter at all, and all of the small details in life become immensely important.

Grief changes a person in every way possible. Often, fathers who went about rushing to and from work hardly noticing anything else now stop and stare at a butterfly and find themselves openly weeping. Many mothers who never worried about anything now find themselves to be overly protective, and they worry about every minute detail of the day. Grief places a different set of priorities on a parent’s heart, and it also creates an unexplainable fear.

Following the death of a young child, a parent will often cry out in frustration asking, “Who am I? A parent in grief often reacts to others in open frustration and anger. Many parents say they withdraw from those who were their closest friends, alienating themselves from a much-needed support system. Grief brings about many new and different changes in a person!

Remember that eventually you will begin to enjoy life again. Little by little, the new you will begin to see joy in living. Your pain will not always remain so raw and open. Most of the time, grief brings about some very positive changes. You will have a different set of priorities, and many times the new you is more aware of what is really and truly important in this life.

Who am I? You are a person who has felt the pain of loss and who knows the joy of love. You are a person who has been forced into a place where you must make many difficult choices and changes. You are a person whose life is now governed by a heart that has felt immense pain and that makes you acutely more aware of the pain in the lives of others.

Most of all, you are a parent. Just because your child no longer walks this earth does not mean you are not still a parent. Who am I? You are a parent who will always love your child!

How to Handle Mother's Day after Losing a Child By Paula Stephens

Many people consider Mother's Day to be a 'Hallmark Holiday' drummed up by greedy retailers. And maybe it is. I read the other day the average Mother's Day gift is \$172.00. But \$172.00 won't bring our beloved children back and Mother's Day, sans the Hallmark card, becomes a day when we are surrounded with reminders of our loss.

This past week I asked everyone who is my email list to send me their best wisdom about how to handle Mother's Day after losing a child. I also posted it on my Facebook page and asked for people to share tips on that support other bereaved moms. Wow... I've been overwhelmed with love, compassion, insight and kindness. This includes the amazing women who have said, "I have no idea what to do, help me!"

I believe that part of our healing journey is to offer our wisdom and insight into those who have come after us, and those who are just now coming out of the darkness regardless of time. I know for me, I never thought about how I would handle Mother's Day after losing a child – until I had to. You are such a source of profound healing- pay it forward!

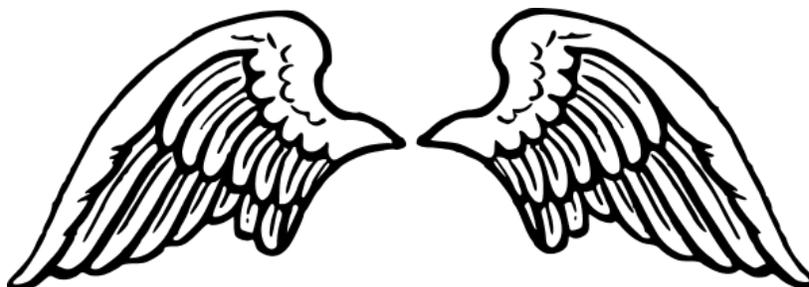
Here are my Top 4 Tips on how to handle Mother's Day after losing a child

1. Grief is a dynamic process, what worked last year might not work this year and what works this year will change next. Leave yourself open to new ways of approaching where you are. Also, if you have a tough year, don't get attached to thinking, "that's how it going to be for the rest of my life!". Accept it as simply being a tough year and look to find ways to improve it.
2. There is no right or wrong way to do this. You are the only one who can determine what you need. You are as individual as the relationship you had with your loved one. Honor your uniqueness.
3. Know that it's not just 'the day' that makes it hard. Often it's the days leading up to and following it that weigh on us. The anticipation and the let down can be very exhausting. Set aside 10 minutes to check in with your self – How's your energy, your mood, your body, your emotional state?
4. Don't be afraid to feel like you're moving forward – We don't HAVE to stay stuck, we can choose happiness... If for no other reason than you, of all people, deserve it!

Our Children Remembered

May Birthdays

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
Daniel Esposito son of Julie and Joseph Esposito
Kenneth Barclay son of Rachel and Philip Barclay



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
Shane Patrick Murphy son of Karen and Kevin Murphy
Donald Tottingham son of Mal and Bobbie Tottingham
Robert Maloney Son of Donna and Robert Maloney
Dakota Thomas son of Jeanne Mace & brother of Lauren Steeves
Todd MacDonald son of John and Janet MacDonald

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: tcfnoshorenews@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>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
Billerica	Jeff Moore, son, 17, moped accident	978-663-8539
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

Getting Help from Helping

Whenever I talk to someone about The Compassionate Friends, somewhere in the conversation I usually find myself saying “..and they helped save my life”. What I am really intending to say is that TCF has been an important part of my journey from immeasurable grief to a life worth living. The help that I have received changed my life because it allowed me to help others.

For me, like many in the early stages of grief, help was a one-way street. I needed help but I was in no shape to help others much, even other family members. Maybe I did attempt to support others in those early days but I am not sure how I could have. As time passed I began to feel a connection to helping others who were going through grief and trauma, whether it be the loss of a child or other significant tragedy. Eventually I realized that by trying to help others I too was being helped. I was not trying to help myself by helping others, it just worked out that way. But why does it work that way? I think it is because in doing so we are acknowledging the most important fact of life – that we are all connected. When we suffer a tragedy such as losing our child we become isolated by grief. We don't feel connected to anything but our grief. When we are ready, beginning to help others can reveal that our connection to the world does still exist.

Helping can take many forms, some of which may seem small but they all matter. One of the most powerful forms of help is simply being a good listener. Sitting with someone, paying attention to what they are saying and listening with compassion can sometimes provide more comfort than anything else. Often we feel the need to fix things and end up saying something along the lines of “why don't you do this.. or that”. My youngest daughter gave me the best talking-to on this subject; she said “When you offer advice it seems like you weren't listening to what I was talking to you about. You were more focused on what advice to give”. She was right. Heartfelt listening is much more important than any advice we can give.

Anonymous help can be especially connecting. This is the type of help we offer that purposely goes without recognition. It can be as simple as paying someone else's toll or paying for someone else's coffee or lunch anonymously. It can be writing a simple note letting someone know that they are being thought of and prayed for without signing it. The reason why anonymous deeds are so powerful for both the giver and the receiver is because it illuminates the truth of our universal connectivity.

One of the most valuable things we can bring with us when we are ready to provide help to others is a non-judgmental attitude. If we are there to help, judging someone only leads us astray. This is especially important when someone is experiencing deep pain and suffering. Judging is akin to the earlier discussion of offering advice. If we are judging, we are not leading with our hearts and this becomes obvious.

Whatever form your helping takes you will find it creates a beautiful circle. Someone helped you which benefited you and helped them. You now help others which helps them which helps you. It's just the way it works.

When my mother died several years ago I remember sitting down and meditating on my memories of her. The thing that stood out most was how kind she was. Not just to her family and friends but to everyone, including innumerable strangers. While helping others appeared to bring her true happiness it was a little perplexing. Her level of commitment to others was almost daunting. While helping others was admirable, at some point it could clearly become an imposition. But it never did for her. Now I think I know why. She did not do it to help herself, she did it to help them. Her happiness was simply a by-product.

When you are ready, help yourself by helping others.

Dave

Love Notes



My dear sweet Olivia, on May 31st, you miss your birthday, turning 29

June 2010, you missed your happy celebration, your high school graduation.

In September 2010, you missed our dreams of attending the University of Vermont

An intelligent and ambitious young woman, you missed an incredible career.

Seeing pictures of your best friend getting married, reminds me you missed a big, beautiful, happy wedding day.

Knowing how much your little nephews adored you, you missed being a great mom, with an extremely happy grandmother following your kids around.

And every minute, of each and every day, I will forever miss you by my side.

Jody Marchand
Mother of Olivia Marchand

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 – May 2021



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