



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *North Shore-Boston Chapter*

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

Newsletter

January 2024

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 via Zoom Online at 7:00PM. We also hold an in-person meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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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[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

Monday, 2/5/24

7:00 PM

##### **Online Video Meeting**

Please contact [tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com) if you would like to participate

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Wednesday, 2/21/24

##### **Online Video Meeting - 7:00 PM**

Please contact [tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com) if you would like to participate

Topic: Open Sharing Session

-and-

##### **Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM**

Please contact [Aimeeb15@gmail.com](mailto:Aimeeb15@gmail.com) if you would like to participate

Topic: Finding Out Your Sibling Died

Wednesday, 2/28/24

7:00 PM

##### **In-Person Meeting**

Please contact [tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com) if you would like to attend

Topic: Coping With Everyday Life

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JOEL LINDQUIST  
Your love is a gift  
we've been given to hold.  
Like a beautiful rose  
it will slowly unfold  
in our hearts.  
Remembering you  
on the 22nd anniversary  
of your angel date.  
Love,  
Mom, Dad and Andrew



-and-

TODD MacDONALD  
Todd,  
We miss you so much  
especially this time of year  
when I really need and miss  
your tech support  
and boisterous sense of humor –  
until I step on a long forgotten Lego –

Remember?  
God Bless You Man!

Tracy, Mom, and I can't wait to see you again!  
Love, Mom, Dad, and Tracy



## Screening Calls for My Dead Son

By [Casey Mulligan Walsh](#)

From Modern Loss

One day, early in August, the phone rings.

“Hello?”

“Eric Hendrickson, please.”

“Sorry, he’s not here,” I reply.

You have no idea how sorry I am he’s not here.

“We’re calling about a \$60 check he wrote to Price Chopper on October 28. It was returned for insufficient funds.”

“Seriously? That was nine months ago.”

But God, it feels so good to hear someone say his name again. If only this were as simple as giving this wayward son of mine hell when he gets home.

“With fees, he now owes \$82. If he doesn’t pay right away, it goes to our lawyer.”

I check in with myself, not sure just what I’m feeling. Apparently, I’ve taken too much time for the voice on the other end of the phone.

“Hello? Is he there?”

“No.”

“How can we get in touch with him?”

Ah, now I’ve put my finger on it. I’m actually looking forward to what comes next. Warily glancing at the sympathy cards stacked beside the still unopened boxes of thank-you notes, I mutter into the mouthpiece, “He’s dead.”

“Dead?” I detect a note of skepticism.

“Dead. He died on June 12.”

Standing in the office, a sigh escapes me as I lean down and use my free hand to wrestle the filing cabinet drawers closed. They’re overflowing. Financial disclosure statements. Responses to family court petitions. Letters from the kids’ teachers attesting to my parental devotion. The divorce decree. It was 1999, and it had been a long three fear-filled years, culminating in one final crash, both figuratively and literally. My marriage was over, my 20-year-old son had died in a single-car accident, and my two younger kids were having an understandably tough time. There was, at last, nothing left to prove.

I’d surprised myself when Eric passed, possessing a calm I didn’t know was possible. They came, young and old. Together we cried, remembered him, and tried to make sense of something so utterly senseless. I reassured them all that whatever they wished they had said to him, done for him, he knew this now, and they could, like him, rest in peace.

But the legions of comforters had retreated to their own lives, and the house was terribly silent. Knowing that middle-of-the-night wakefulness would be my undoing, I stayed up into the wee hours, until I was

exhausted enough to pass out on the bed. His bed, his things still taking up most of the territory, leaving just enough room for me to engulf myself in him, his smell, his presence slowly fading.

Eric's death, so quickly old news. But the telling makes it real again — makes him real. They say his name and it brings him back, into the present, even if only for a moment.

"We're sorry for your loss." The disembodied voice jars me back to the issue at hand. "Just send us a copy of the death certificate."

Oh, boy. It falls out of my mouth before I even have time to think.

"No."

"No?" Her voice is incredulous. "Ma'am, we'll need a copy of the death certificate."

My words come out in a rush. "Sorry, I'm not sending you one. It's public record. What're you gonna do, have him arrested?"

"We're attempting to collect a debt. Someone has to take care of this, or you'll have to send us the death certificate."

"I understand. I just won't do it." This is strangely exhilarating, freeing — refusing to explain, producing no evidence. I stop short of being rude, sticking instead to statements of fact. Several exchanges later, the collection lady wholly unsatisfied, I hang up.

That's that, I think. But week after week, well into the fall, I answer the phone to hear the familiar request, spoken each time by a different voice, "Eric Hendrickson, please." Each time, I tell them, "He's not here," and each time, a variation on the same drill.

"Would you like us to stop calling?"

"You bet," I reply.

"Then send us a death certificate."

"Nope. Talk to you soon!"

Another day, "We're looking for Eric Hendrickson."

"You're gonna have a hard time reaching him," I say, a little too gleefully.

Finally, I've had enough.

"Eric Hendrickson, please."

"Listen," I say. "He's dead. He was dead the last time you called, he's still dead, and he's probably gonna be dead the next time you call. Why don't you just save your money and stop calling?"

Weeks later, I realize they had. I couldn't know we'd had our final skirmish until the phone had gone deafeningly silent.

I was sad when the calls ended; now there was no one saying his name. I'd won the battle, but in a strange way, it felt like I'd lost the war.


 **January Birthdays**

Shane Michael Loizides son of Janet Sutcliffe sibling of Branden Loizides  
Todd MacDonald son of John and Janet MacDonald  
Daniel M. Scafidi son of Martin and Barbara Scafidi / stepson of Sandra Scafidi  
Geoffrey Gonzalez son of Iris Gonzalez  
Maria Lorraine Andrews daughter of Michelle Smith  
Neal Richard O'Brien Jr. son of Neal and Nancy O'Brien  
Craig Gentleman son of Mary and Jack Gentleman  
Christina Laura-Ann Saviano Daughter of Laurie Saviano  
Jonathan (Jed) Lazar son of Jon and Noreen Lazar  
Darien Sanford-Castro son of Diane Sanford  
Christopher Michael Rollins son of Nancy & Rick Rollins  
Zachary Doyle Hilton son of Patricia Doyle  
Katherine Stephanie Grant daughter of Laurie Grant  
Robert Kagacha son of Sarah Kagacha  
Mario Miller son of Maria Sallese  
Alex Vitale son of Rob & Robin Vitale  
Nathaniel (Nate) Doiron son of Stacey & Linus Doiron and grandson of Dorothy Molley  
Faith-Ena Davianna Watkins daughter of Andria Nemoda and Michael Watkins  
Brian Robert Pellegrino nephew of Alyse and Joe Bonfiglio  
Lucas Kump grandson of Linda Bump  
Tina Lee Ducharme daughter of Deb Linnehan

 **January Angel Dates**

Aram Karakashian son of Pat and Garo Karakasian  
Deirdre Helene Olson daughter of Catherine E.B. Olson  
Glenn Buttrick son of Heidi Scott  
Peter Costas son of Barbara Costas, Sibling of Alaine Costas  
Victor Vogis son of Victor and Margo Vogis  
Jonathan Corey son of Reenie McCormack and Ron Corey  
Brianna Lee Paul daughter of David & Melinda Paul sister of Erin and Eden Paul  
Robert Anthony Viera son of Arlene Viera  
Courtney Marie Corning daughter of Ginny & Jack Corning  
Christopher Muraca son of Maria Muraca  
Jessica Cormier daughter of Walter Cormier and Barbara Melesciuc sibling of Nicole Cormier  
Joel Wesley Lindquist son of Roy and Mariann Lindquist  
Matthew Dalimonte son of Patti Dalimonte  
Julia Elizabeth Vanella daughter of Joseph Vanella, Jr.  
Kaleigh Lambert granddaughter of Irene Lambert  
Shane Lambert grandson of Irene Lambert  
Faith-Ena Davianna Watkins daughter of Andria Nemoda and Michael Watkins  
Quinlan Weekes son of Lindsay and Jaunel Weekes  
Eliot Lee Bennett son of Eric and Elizabeth Bennett  
Robert DeCarlo son of Janet DeCarlo Staples  
Katy Warde daughter of Peg Warde  
Daniel Rogers son of Donna Rogers  
Anthony Diaz son of Gail Scimone  
Paulyne Mbowa daughter of Julius Mbowa



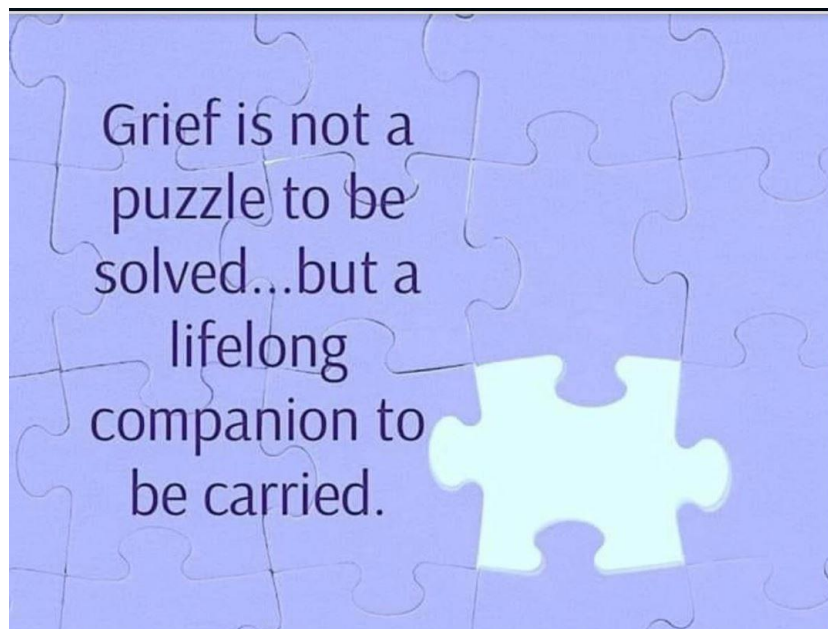
	<p>Our telephone friends are here to help you if you feel the need to connect with someone outside of our usual meeting night. We are not professionals – we are all bereaved parents seeking to find a way through our grief.</p> <p><b>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.</b></p>	
Beverly	Carmen Pope, son, 3 days, anencephaly; son, 11, boating accident	978-998-4087
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](mailto:tcfnoshoreweb@gmail.com)

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





# Love Notes



## Silhouette

© Tony Doiron

Could I have another moment?  
 Another kiss, another smile,  
 One more chance to watch you sleep  
 Or just to sit awhile.

Ours to keep, or so we thought.  
 We found we were mistaken.  
 Like most of those who've lost a child,  
 We felt we were forsaken.

When I watched your life play through my mind,  
 I can't believe I failed to see  
 The silhouette of angel wings  
 There to set you free.

**me**  
 I no longer feel like so angry.  
 You were heaven's all along, you see.  
 Our time will come to be with you  
 To share eternity. h in nn as



*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:**

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## 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 – January 2024**



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

[tfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tfnoshorenews@gmail.com)