



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

May 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 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday of each month In Person at 7:00PM at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 235 Park Street, North Reading at 7:00 P.M. We also hold an Online meeting via Zoom on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00PM. 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.

National Office:
The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom MI 48393
 Toll-free: **877-969-0010**
PH: 630-990-0010
FAX: 630-990-0246

www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings



Monday, 6/3/24
7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

Please contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to attend

Topic: Who Are You Now? / Struggling With Identity

Wednesday, 6/19/24

In-Person Meeting - 7:00 PM

Please contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to attend

Topic: Open Sharing Session

-and-

Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM

Please contact Aimeeb15@gmail.com if you would like to participate

Topic: Secondary Losses

Wednesday, 6/26/24
7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

Please contact tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com if you would like to participate

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Monday, 7/1/24
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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 978-532-2736





ERIC KRASKER

So many years
gone by &
not a day we
don't think of you.

Love you forever & ever.
Happy heavenly birthday

Mom, Dad & Lynne

-and-



GEORGE SILVA

Another year has come and gone.
Though we feel your presence every day,
you are always missed.
We love you very much.

Happy Birthday George.

Love, Mom and Bob,
Gus and Aimee
and Family



Father's Day

As we approach Father's Day, I want to point out something I've realized that I think might go unnoticed by most of society: Bereaved dads are brave dads.

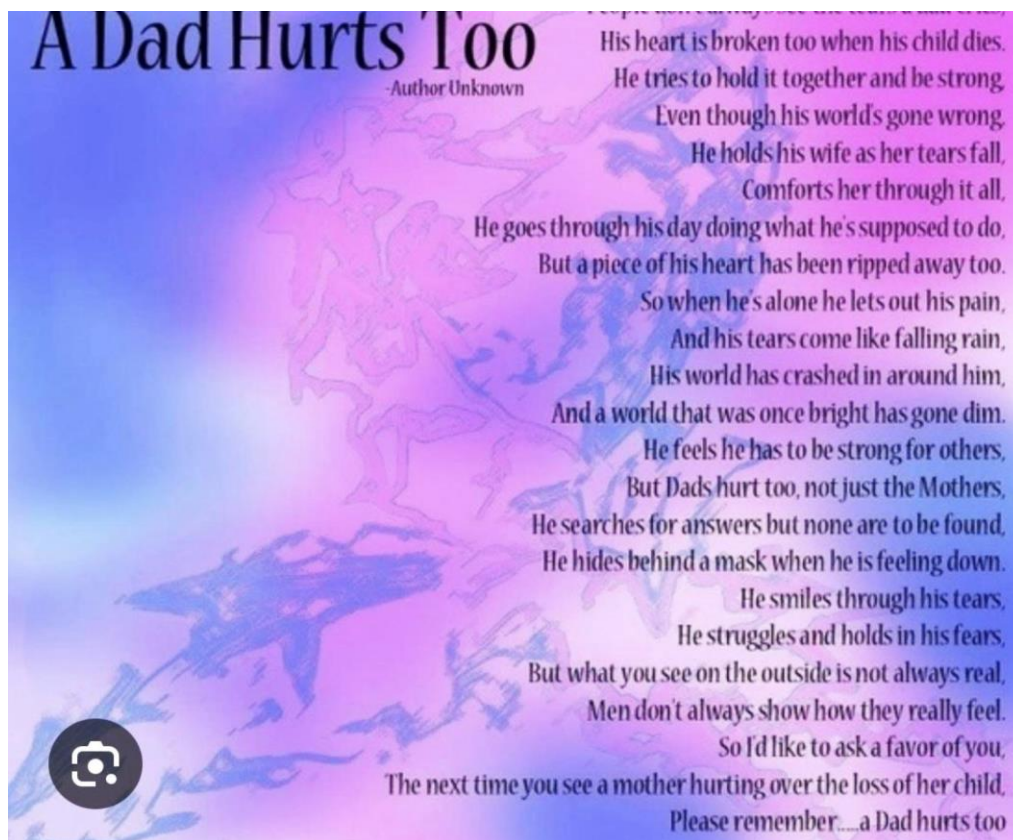
The *bravest* dads.

We talk a lot about what bereaved moms go through and **how fierce they are as mothers**. But the dads undoubtedly deserve more recognition than they get.

The bereaved dads I know are truly incredible. They help the bereaved moms pick up the pieces of a life ravaged by grief, while simultaneously grieving themselves.

They put on strong faces as they tell loved ones the news their partner may not be able to get off her lips.

They go before her, preparing the way for her to cautiously re-enter social environments, setting expectations and cautioning others of what she can and cannot handle.



I'm a Grieving Mom. This is The One Thing I Most Want To Hear On Mother's Day.

"We think about our children all the time. We like to know you think of them, too."

By Danielle Roderick

HuffPost May 11, 2023

"On Mother's Day, I can think of no mother more deserving than a mother that had to give one back."

[Erma Bombeck](#) said that. I like Erma — I like that there is a [writing retreat](#) in her honor where a writer gets a free two weeks at a Marriott in Dayton, Ohio. I like that she didn't give an inch when it came to writing, or motherhood. I also like that she paid attention to us bereaved moms, and wasn't sappy about it.

Six years ago, my second son was stillborn. There is no sentence that can sum up such a thing, so just trust me, it was unimaginable. His death rearranged most things in my life, and I say with more than a little pride that it is truly something to be a functioning person again, to be a parent to my living children, to have survived the great lightning crack of grief that came for us and that still zips through me at a low current. But every year, Mother's Day shows up, ready to wrestle with me.

My first few Mother's Days as a new mom were bright and giddy — pancakes and flowers and finger-painted cards. It felt like a lovely (though very short) day of honor for the insane effort that parenting demanded. I slept late, I got a necklace with my kid's name on it, I was a mom doing mom things.

And then, our second son died, and Mother's Day became this great huge bruise. The first year of grief, I was afraid of the day. I wanted to hide, to avoid the sight of smiling women fêted with flowers or running away to a hotel room for the night to escape their kids. I was bitter, angry, offended by a world that was so joyfully uninterested in my loss. And I desperately wanted to be known not just as a mother, but as *his mother*. I wanted to hear his name. I wanted people to reach out and recognize that this day, of the many hard days in the year, might be a doozy, too. Nobody did.

In my half-decade of doing this holiday with the hard and unwanted title of "bereaved parent," I've grown less bitter. I know people don't keep catalogs of all of our personal tragedies, and I know that others do remember but choose not to say anything, in case it would make us sadder. Here's the thing, though: Most of us bereaved parents don't want that kind of protection. We think about our children all the time. We like to know that you think of them, too.

Not hearing all your children's names on Mother's Day can feel like a great erasure. I have living children, and when folks don't mention my child who died, I assume they don't see him as part of my mothering experience. If I'm feeling really low, I can quickly jump to the conclusion that nobody remembers him except me, or even that my community doesn't care about one of the most defining experiences of my life.

What I wish for every year are small nods. A text that says, "Hey, I know this day may be hard for you." A note that wishes me a gentle day and includes my son's name. Any acknowledgment that I am a mother who mothered in the hardest of ways, that I am and was a good mom to all my kids. It would be a wonder to know my friends still see the love I carry for my son, and love me for it. I don't need accolades. What I really want is to know that my community sees me and the full package of what mothering has been in my life.

I'll double down on this request for the bereaved parents who don't have living children. For a mom like that, Mother's Day might become a giant question she can't ask out loud — wanting to know if the world can reflect her own identity back to her as a mother. The worst thing to do for a person like that, unless she has specifically requested it, is to say and do nothing.

So here's my Erma Bombeck-inspired plea, in the name of anybody you know who might be grieving their child this Mother's Day, even if that child died decades ago. Be nice to us. Acknowledge us. Say something. Whether it's your sister, friend, cousin: Reach out. Send that text and say her child's name when you talk about her family. Be brave! I volunteer at a support group for bereaved parents, and I've never met a parent who didn't want to hear their child's name, or have somebody join them in appreciation for the love they hold for their child.

The best Mother's Day gift you can give is the nod that you see us as moms, and not just a version of a mom that makes you feel comfortable. The slightest gestures can be profound and joyful, an act of true connection.

Years ago, a woman I'd met once and friended on Facebook was enjoying her first Mother's Day as a mother. She was a poet, and throughout the day, she posted 300 times, exuberantly shouting out all the variations of mothers in our culture. To single mothers! To those without mothers! To her mother! To those who mother the neighbor's kids! It was an endless, glowing list of respect for the many versions of mothers there are. The recognition was breathtaking, life-giving

I think of her joy now, as I head into this next Mother's Day. I want to coast off of her insistent exuberance. This year, I will send out my wish for other bereaved moms, a really simple one: May you hear your child's name to

**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 Burkeson 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
Joseph Blasetti son of Donna Blasetti
Justin Joseph Hartford son of Jen Smith



**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
Sean Michael Reynolds son of LouAnne Reynolds
Xavier Salaman son of Susan Salaman
Edward Michael Hedrington son of Jo Hedrington
Sam Cioffi son of Doug Cioffi
Michael Gannon Sibling of Alice and Gil Costa
Bella-Francesca Kamga daughter of Pearl Kamga
Sidney Mae Olson daughter of Mary Beth Ellis and Eric Olson
Noah Caiden Santiago son of Katelyn Muise and Dane Santiago
Angela Desmond daughter of George Desmond Jr
Rachel-Marie Thomas daughter of Kellyanne Pheulpin and step daughter of Todd Pheulpin



	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
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:

tcfnorthshoreweb@gmail.com

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

A Garden for Our Children 2024



From the North Shore-Boston TCF Chapter Spring Event



Love Notes



THERE IS A SACREDNESS IN TEARS.
 THEY ARE NOT THE MARK OF
 WEAKNESS, BUT OF POWER.
 THEY SPEAK MORE ELOQUENTLY
 THAN TEN THOUSAND TONGUES.
 THEY ARE THE MESSENGERS OF
 OVERWHELMING GRIEF, OF DEEP
 CONTRITION, AND OF
 UNSPEAKABLE LOVE.

WASHINGTON IRVING
Your tango

I LOVE YOU EVERY DAY.
 AND NOW I WILL MISS
 YOU EVERY DAY.

“May there be
 comfort in knowing
 that someone so special
 will never be forgotten.”

—JULIE HÉBERT

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:

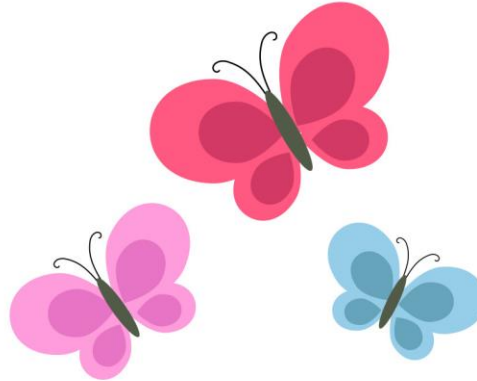
TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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



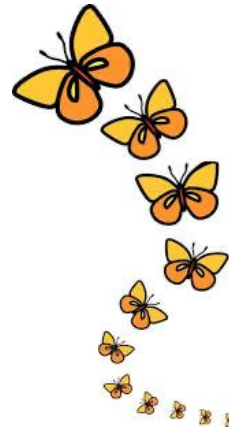
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIALS
PLEASE FORWARD



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

NEWSLETTER – May 2024



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