



# The Compassionate Friends

## North Shore-Boston Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

November 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 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.**  
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**Wixom MI 48393**  
 Toll-free: **877-969-0010**  
**PH: 630-990-0010**  
**FAX: 630-990-0246**  
[www.thecompassionatefriends.org](http://www.thecompassionatefriends.org)

#### Upcoming Meetings

Monday, 12/2/24  
 7:00 PM

##### In-Person Meeting

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

**Topic:** Open Sharing Session

Sunday, 12/8/24  
 6:30 PM

#### CANDLELIGHT REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Wednesday, 12/18/24

##### In-Person Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

**Topic:** Self Care After a Loss

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GEORGE SILVA

Dear George,

We are grateful for all our memories  
and every moment we shared.  
We will continue to celebrate  
your beautiful life on earth.  
We love and miss you always.

Love,  
Mom and Bob,  
Gustavo and Aimee and Family

-and-

JAMES KIRIAKOS

Jimmy You Are So Missed

You filled the world with  
Special joy and happiness untold.  
You always had a sunny way  
and a loving heart of gold.  
You made life so much brighter,  
just by being thoughtful, too....  
And saying kind and helpful things  
was typical of you.  
That's why it's hard to face the world  
and know you won't be there,  
Lighting up life so warmly  
with your smile beyond compare.  
The memories you've left behind  
grow sweeter day by day  
You are so missed, Jimmy,  
more than any words can say.

Love, Mom, Dad, Brother, Family & Friends



## To The Friend Who Left Me After My Son Died

by Jenna Jury

“No matter what life brings, no matter where we go, I promise I will always be by your side.”

That is what the folded letter read – the one you passed to me in between 2nd and 3rd period. It was folded into a perfect triangle with hearts and “I love you” scribbled on the front. When I got home I stuck it in a box buried deep in my closet. The one that held all your notes.

I cherished them. Relied on them really. Knowing you would always be there. It was comforting in an unknown world believing I had someone who would walk alongside me no matter what. What you wrote was true at the time. We had always been there for one another. Through school, graduation, college. weddings. I considered you my best friend.

Then my son died.

I stood next to my son’s tiny casket 5 years after you passed me that note in the hall. When I looked out among the crowd there was a sea of familiar faces. Beautiful and amazing people gathered with us to celebrate our son’s life and grieve with us. Your face, though, was nowhere to be found.

Your absence did not go unnoticed. I put it out of my mind. Pretended I didn’t see, but you not being there was painful. You texted me a few days later to let me know you were thinking of me. Sorry I couldn’t be there, you said, I had plans that day. Then silence. As the weeks and months pulled me further from my son, your absence in my life became bigger. A gaping chasm staring me in the face. You stopped by a few times. But I became too uncomfortable for you to be around.

I wanted to talk about my son. You didn’t. You wanted to talk about breakups and jobs. Small talk. I had difficulty conjuring up the will to live. Everything seemed too frivolous to me. Especially small talk. I cried and you didn’t know what to do with those tears. So you stopped coming around. Then you stopped texting and calling altogether. It seemed we were no longer friends. And maybe we weren’t.

Maybe my grief was too painful for you. Maybe you didn’t know what to say. Or it is possible you felt every move and word you said would be critiqued by me, in my raw heartache. Eventually, you dropped out of my life all together.

It was easier for you to not be around my sadness. My pain. My grief. Did you think about if it was easier for me? I know my heartache was hard. I know it was difficult because I had to live through it. And I still do it. Death is hard. The death of a baby? The death of a baby is downright impossible to bear. Why bear it if you don’t have to? Why open up your eyes and heart to this pain voluntarily?

When my son died I was catapulted into a life that I did not know existed. This is a world where I feel like an outsider. A world where a simple question like “how many children do you have?” or “all girls, huh?” causes my heart to race and my palms to sweat. A world where I have to answer the hard questions about death and sickness and life from a child who cannot tie her own shoes yet. This is a world where I have to consume the heartache and grief of my living children over a sibling they never even met, carrying their pain alongside them, as they try to navigate an alternative life.

It is a life in which I have to be mindful of my own triggers, putting my needs above others, when I hide yet another pregnancy announcement from my Facebook or stay home from the third baby shower in a month. A world I cannot expect you to understand. It is a world I had wanted you in any way.

My son's death forced me into an open door. I didn't have a choice. My family and husband did not have a choice. Every one else had a choice.

Many friends and family members chose to follow us in without hesitation. They chose the muck and pain they didn't understand because they chose us, without hesitation.

I watched as you stood at the doorway. You lingered. What was inside scared you. It was painful. The decor was ugly to look at. The reality too much for you to bear. You turned around slowly, hoping I wouldn't notice and then you were gone.

But I did notice. I don't write this to make you feel guilty. I don't write this to hurt you. The reason I write this, is because I want you to know I understand. I pray you never have to experience the agony of losing a child. I pray those close to you never walk through the doorway of child loss.

But if one day someone close to you is shoved through the child loss door, please do not be scared this time to get down in the muck and pain. Do not be afraid to experience the heartache with your friend. They do not need your perfect words. And they do not need you to fix them. They need you to be there. To walk alongside them as they navigate the unknown. They need you to choose them. They need you not to be scared to enter this world with them.

Because as scared as you may feel staring into the doorway of child death...Your friend is a thousand times more petrified than you.

## TRADITIONS: WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO LET GO

*Posted on November 13th, 2024*

Traditions are very important to our families, and we may share large and small ones throughout the year. Some may be in conjunction with significant events like a graduation or a wedding, and others occur annually on birthdays and holidays. Traditions are passed down through generations, creating comforting experiences and memories that provide a sense of belonging. After our child, grandchild, brother, or sister dies, however, what once was comforting can be painful and intolerable.

This holiday time of the year is often particularly hard for managing different needs within our bereaved families. Whether a few months have passed, a few years, or decades, the empty chair that belonged to our child, sibling, or grandchild, requires us to re-evaluate how traditions feel. Trying to keep a tradition that fit our "before" family may not feel the same or good.

It is especially important to recognize the differing needs of siblings and parents when deciding what to keep and what to let go. For a parent, trying to continue a tradition as it was but with one less child can be very heartbreaking. For a bereaved sibling, losing a tradition that they came to depend on can feel like they're losing even more and have less to count on than ever. When one sibling remains, it can feel overly burdensome to be the sole daughter or son who carries those traditions.


What can we do to manage such deep and personal needs that differ in a family after substantial loss? Here are some steps that can help.

- Sit down together and discuss how everyone is feeling about the upcoming holidays.
- Allow everyone to share how continuing each tradition makes them feel and which may be prohibitively distressing this year.



- Listen compassionately to one another, understanding that needs can vary widely within any loving family unit.
- Work hard to compromise. Try to differentiate what might be difficult for a family member to continue from what would be unbearable.
- Eliminate the ones, for now, that would bring more harm than benefit to any family member.
- Reduce holiday expectations so that each family member has a chance to cherish a tradition that is meaningful and grieve what has been lost.
- Keep traditions that are too upsetting for anyone until another year. Individual and family needs change year to year, and there may be room for those another time.

Having these challenging discussions can be surprisingly valuable as they prompt deeper sharing that can bring us closer. Even long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings can find decision making about what to keep and what to let go of pain at different stages. Allow the flexibility to change when something doesn't feel right since we may be surprised by painful triggers. As we remain open and flexible through each year that passes, we help our families keep some traditions, modify others, and cherish what remains. by : SHARI O'LOUGHLIN

	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. <b>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.</b>	
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 signup sheets are also available at our monthly in-person meetings.


**November Birthdays**

AJ Ryan son of Shirley Loranger  
 Cadyn Nathaniel Douglas son of Cheryl Coss and Andre Douglas  
 Gregory Stames son of Donna Bouley  
 Amy Elizabeth Palmetier daughter of Judy & Joe Palmetier  
 James Kimball Carlsen son of Kathy Carlsen  
 Maxwell O'Hanlon son of Brady and Kim O'Hanlon  
 Amanda L Dick daughter of Kathy Nelson  
 Christopher Muraca son of Maria Muraca  
 Brittany Lynn McCauley Daughter of Nancy and Patrick McCauley  
 Jon James McGlinchey son of Jim and Laureen McGlinchey  
 Ethan Henry Lamphier son of Regan Burke and Bill Lamphier  
 Jared Linzey son of Sharyn & Tom Linzey  
 Michael Gannon sibling of Alice and Gil Costa  
 Philip Everett Reddy son of Phil Reddy  
 Michael Gannon Sibling of Alice and Gil Costa  
 Bella-Francisca Kamga daughter of Pearl Kamga  
 James Lee Aiguier Jr son of Lori Walker  
 Kevin Jollimore son of Ken Jollimore  
 Angela Desmond daughter of George Desmond Jr  
 Marguerite "Maggie" Martin Daughter of Peter and Kimberly Martin




**November Angel Dates**

Christina Laura-Ann Saviano Daughter of Laurie Saviano  
 Daniel M. Scafidi son of Martin and Barbara Scafidi / stepson of Sandra Scafidi  
 Talia Rose Ronga daughter of Debra Ronga  
 Jimmy Kiriakos son of Sandy Tsakirgis  
 Thomas "Scott" Gray son of Laura Gray  
 Madigan Drummond daughter of David Drummond  
 George Silva son of Ester and Bob Boulanger and sibling of Aimee Gordon  
 Steven Kaminski son of Joanne Kaminski  
 Ryan Liam Teague son of Susan Teague  
 Joey Brancato son of Andy Brancato  
 Marc Ouellette son of Donna Marcotte and Bob Ouellette  
 Robert Troiano son of Karen Troiano  
 Stanley Parsons son of Laura Desisto  
 Cary Thabet son of Sheila Khaire Thabet  
 Marc Donovan son of Carol and Neil MacDonald  
 Michael Sawyer son of Diane Sawyer  
 Peter Merrill son of Martha Merrill  
 Ryan Sherman Loughlin son of Cynthia Sherman  
 Joey Domenici son of Carla Domenici  
 Penney Richards daughter of Dave & Penny Richards  
 Emily Anne Driscoll daughter of David F. Driscoll and Rosanne Benedetto Driscoll  
 Nicholas Ryan Amirault son of Rick & JoAnne Amirault  
 Nicholas Amirault sibling of Holly Polito  
 Diane Buckley daughter of Anna Bourque  
 Elliot Weaver son of Kerri Ann & Alex Weaver  
 Miguel Alonzo son of Yasmin Alonzo  
 Alyssa M. Joy daughter of David Joy  
 Desiree Iacobucci daughter of Marisa Iacobucci





## Love Notes



Hi,

For 20 years, since my son David Sjöholm was killed in a road accident, I've appreciated every issue of the North Shore - Boston Chapter newsletter. This is for printing & postage. Thank you for sending this, it is wonderful to get.

~ Anita

*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 – November 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  
[tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com)