



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

October 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:

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Toll-free: **877-969-0010**
PH: 630-990-0010
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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings

Monday, 11/4/24

7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

Topic: Holiday Gatherings and Family Vacations

Wednesday, 11/20/24

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: Remaking Holiday Traditions

11/27/24

7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

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

Topic: Facing the Holidays

Monday, 12/2/24

7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

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tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com

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KORY ADAM OUELLETTE

10/11/02-08/27/23

Happy 22nd birthday in heaven.

We miss and love you
more than words can express.
You live on in our hearts and minds.
We carry the wonderful memories
of you that we all shared together
each and every day
until we meet again.

We love you so much Kory ♥ ,

Love,

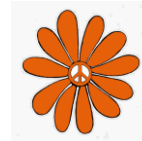
Mom, Dad, Kyle and Ryan..

Maya and Simba too!

-and-

TIMOTHY GLENDINNING

A Birthday Wish for Timothy



October 27th will be 28 years since that magical day we first met. That night your mom and I were going to a Halloween Costume Party across the street from our house. We were dressed as vampires, with capes; your mom liked the cape because it hides your baby-bump. The one neighbor didn't believe mom was pregnant until she opened up her cape, and there you were. The party ended, we walked across the street, we walked in the front door and you made a splash right there. About 14 hours later, you and I met and it was magical, you were perfect.

We had 20 birthdays together, and each time we had a cake with candles, and birthday wishes as you blew out the candles. You might've gotten some of those wishes, and maybe more of them, not so much? I always wanted to give you more, but as the years ticked by you would say, having us together was what counted; I thought that was your gift to us from you.

This birthday, we will still have a cake, candles and as we blow out your candles and make a wish...it will be your wish for us...having us together. This will be our 8th birthday without you blowing out your candles, but making your wish will carry on for many years. One day we will all gather at your table, and once again we will all be together again, just as you wished to be.

We miss you, and love you, especially on this day, I think your wish is my wish for everyone.

Love Mom, Dad and Katherine

Sunday December 8th at 6:30PM -The Compassionate Friends Candle Lighting Ceremony

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The Aldersgate United Methodist Church – 235 Park Street North Reading MA

GRIEVING ON THE JOB: HOW TO NAVIGATE WORK AFTER THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Posted on October 25th, 2024

Roger Harden was relaxing at home on a Friday evening when his phone rang. Seeing his son TJ's number on the screen, he answered, saying "Hey son, what's up?" After a long silence, an unfamiliar voice said, "Mr. Harden, this is Kevin, deputy coroner for Jersey County. There's been an accident."

TJ had been driving up a levee near work when his truck flipped. According to Kevin, TJ had died instantly.

After a brief conversation, Roger hung up the phone. His 30-year-old son was dead. Life as he knew it was over, but Roger had phone calls to make: to his ex-wife, TJs mom; his younger son; his father; texts to send to his manager and a close friend at Delta Air Lines where he works; a funeral to plan.

Grief is an inescapable part of life. The death of a child or sibling is shattering, and when it happens, we bring our pain and sadness to work with us. Yet the vast majority of workplaces are ill-prepared to navigate the minefield of loss.

Very few managers receive training on how to support a grieving employee and many have little to no experience dealing with significant losses of their own. Despite their best intentions, they may say and do the wrong thing. They may neglect to tell your coworkers your child has died. They may check in infrequently to see how you're handling the return to work and stop all together once you appear to be doing better.

Although virtually everyone who's grieving returns to work before they're ready, here are some ways to ease the transition and garner support from your boss and your team:

Begin with what you need.

- Think about the return. Do you want to start on Monday and work a full week? Or would you prefer to come back on Thursday or Friday? Would it help to stop by the office for a short visit first to get the initial conversations with your coworkers out of the way?
- If you have an in-person role, would you prefer to work from home for a while? If you work remotely, would you prefer to be in the office, either to be around your team or to have a refuge from your grief?
- Consider whether you want your colleagues to bring up your loss. Are there circumstances when you don't want people to approach you? Do you want your coworkers to send cards, offer to drop off a meal, leave flowers on your desk?
- Roger's boss told him to take all the time he needed, but two weeks after TJs death, Roger realized he couldn't sit home alone any longer. When he returned to work, his manager asked, "What are you doing here?" Roger said, "I can't stay at home." His manager nodded and said, "Fair enough."

Reach out to your boss.

- Begin by confirming that everyone knows about your loss. Roger's bosses made sure his team and the others he worked with knew about TJ's death which eliminated his need to share the awful news. It also prevented awkward encounters with coworkers cheerfully asking where he'd gone during his time off. Discuss the timing and details of your return and request any accommodations you'll need for funeral arrangements, grief support, child care, etc.

Let your boss know whether you want your colleagues to mention your loss at work and how you want them to acknowledge it, if at all.

Consider what you can and can't do.

- Your boss and your colleagues can't read your mind. Although they may offer to help, they won't know what you do and don't need. Think about the responsibilities of your position and what might feel hard or impossible right now. Could you talk to suppliers on the phone? Meet with customers? Deliver a

presentation?

Your brain may feel fuzzy, and focusing may be a challenge. Consider asking one of your colleagues to check your work for typos or mathematical errors before it's sent to a customer or another department.

- After returning to work, Roger felt as though he was going through the motions. "I'm the expert on electrical discharge machines (EDM), and I can run the EDM blindfolded. So that's what I did. I took all the EDM projects, whether they were a high priority or not, and everyone was okay with that. I knew my brain wasn't working the way it should, but I also knew I needed to be at work and keep my brain functioning."

Ask your boss or a trusted colleague to serve as your point person.

- Even well-meaning coworkers will make mistakes. They'll bring up your loss or inquire about whether you're doing okay, even if you asked them not to. The person you least want to spend time with will keep cornering you in the breakroom or popping into your cubicle to invite you out for coffee. Colleagues won't understand why mentioning your loved one's name or asking how your kids are coping just before an all staff meeting or client presentation is the wrong time. A point person can redirect an overly eager coworker or gently educate your team on how and when to broach your loss.

Prepare to cry at work.

- Grief is unpredictable, and triggers are everywhere. Carry tissues at all times. If you don't have an office, find a safe space to retreat to if you need a few minutes alone. A private bathroom, a close friend's office, a rarely used conference room, a quiet spot outside.

Be honest with your colleagues.

- If you're struggling, ask for help. Your boss and your team can't support you if they don't know what you need. If you want a decrease in your workload or a different assignment, say so. If the holidays are triggering or the anniversary of your child's death is approaching, ask about taking time off.
- Roger connected early on with a coworker at Delta named Tim Moye who had also lost his son. Roger sent unfiltered emails to Tim asking questions like "Who cries in the blade tip grinding room? Or at Lowe's or Ollie's Bargain Outlet?" Tim responded by saying, "Congratulations. You're normal."

Know that your needs will change over time.

- Your grief will ebb and flow. The acute pain will ease, but you will still get blindsided by sadness. Keep your boss and point person updated on how you're doing, what you're finding challenging and where you need extra help or support. They won't know anything has changed if you don't tell them.

Give yourself grace.

- Weighed down with grief, you may snap at a coworker or burst into tears during a meeting. Months, even years, after your child or sibling dies, you may struggle to concentrate at times or feel stressed or anxious. Conversely, you may discover that work is a safe haven from your sadness. You'll find yourself joking with a colleague or allowing a project to distract you from your loss. Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can.

Most of all, remember to breathe. "For me," Roger said, "for most machinists, we hate making mistakes. We hate getting things wrong. We hate missing details, and we hate scrapping parts. But if you can pause, take measured steps, do what you know how to do in the way you know how to do it, you can still get the job done.

By **MARGO FOWKE**


 **October Birthdays**

John Queenan son of Margie Queenan
Katy Warde daughter of Peg Warde
Susan Eaton daughter of Patti Eaton
Lindsey Dias daughter of Bruce Dias
James Vincent Barreira son of Susan Barreira
Robert Anthony Viera son of Arlene Viera
Alyssa Lynne Nanopoulos daughter of Andrew & Nancy Nanopoulos
Christian E. Frechette grandson of Janet Frechette
Jimmy Reppucci sibling of Crystal Reppucci
Samantha Ruth Fargo daughter of William and Justine Fargo
Timothy Glendinning son of Tim and Barbara Glendinning
Max Durham son of Andrew & Mary Durham
Benjamin Huxtable grandson of Alaina & Peter Huxtable
Charlie Carmillo son of Paul & Amie Carmillo
Christopher Howland Webber son of Joanie Howland and Bill Webber
Elliot Weaver son of Kerri Ann & Alex Weaver
Kayla Bell daughter of Stephen and Paulette Bell
Miguel Alonzo son of Yasmin Alonzo
Lenardo Clement son of Muriel Clement
Maren Cao Daughter of Xuandong Cao
Noah Caiden Santiago son of Katelyn Muise and Dane Santiago
Kory Ouellette Son of Steve and Maureen Ouellette
Tyrell Trouville son of Holly Trouville
Teagan Carey Jennings daughter of Ryan and Angel Jennings

 **October Angel Dates**

Patricia Gail Kingston daughter of Elaine and John Kingston
Christopher Genna son of Joseph & Leslie Genna
Daniel Noah (Danny) Fine son of Gail and Stephen Fine
Paul A. Nestor son of Geri & Bob Gatchell
Christopher Dennis Lane son of Marilyn Lane
Nicholas Erbafina son of Susan and Charlie Erbafina Sibling of Jackie Erbafina
Neal Richard O'Brien Jr. son of Neal and Nancy O'Brien
Jonathan (Jed) Lazar son of Jon and Noreen Lazar
Andrew Brooks Son of David and Waldina Cameron
Alyssa Rose Conte daughter of Janice and David Conte
Nicholas Sean Carey son of Linda Calandrella
Alex Vitale son of Rob & Robin Vitale
Victor Hugo Batista DeMacedo son of Patricia Dos Santos
Ethan Costello son of Kelly Costello
Neil Wetzler son of Philomena Wetzler
Kristina Latham daughter of Kerry and Kevin Latham, Sibling of Josh Latham
Corey Noel son of Gary Noel
David Conant Siljeholm son of Anita Siljeholm
Anderson James Elam son of Lynette Elam
Scott Nagel son of Fiona Nagel
Patricia Gail Kingston daughter of Elaine and John Kingston
Daniel Esposito son of Julie and Joseph Esposito
Jackson Mace son of Jeanne Mace & Sibling of Lauren Steeves
Brandon Ste.Croix son of Andrea and Larry Green
Erin McLaughlin daughter of Jan McLaughlin
Erik Sean Rakos son of Frances Rakos



	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: tcfnoshoreweb@gmail.com

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

Coping With Grief During the Holidays

Talk about your grief. Don't worry about bringing anyone down. You're allowed to grieve and you're allowed to talk about it.
Create boundaries with your time. If you need to take time for yourself - do it.
Find a way to honor them. Start a new tradition that celebrates their memory.
Set realistic expectations. You will probably be sad, angry, or upset and that's okay.
Allow yourself to feel all of your feelings. Resentment and anger are normal emotions.
Check-in with your needs. Reach out for hugs. Let people know you need extra love.



Love Notes



In memory of Daniel "Danny" Fine,
 The real voyage whatever the boat is into the soul.
 Love Mom, Dad, Aron, Rebecca and Mike



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 – October 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