



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

September 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 - 10/7/24 - 7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

(E-mail invitation to follow)

You may also contact

David Paul

to request an invitation

Topic: When People Ask, "How Are You?" or "How Many Children Do You Have?"

Wednesday - 10/16/24

In-Person Meeting - 7:00 PM

(E-mail invitation to follow)

You may also contact

David Paul

to request an invitation

Topic: Open Sharing Session

-and-

Sibling Online Video Meeting

7:30 PM

(E-mail invitation to follow)

You may also contact Aimeeb15@gmail.com

if you would like to participate

Topic: Favorite Things About

Your Sibling

Wednesday - 10/23/24

Online Video Meeting - 7:00 PM

Please contact

David Paul

if you would like to attend

Topic: Staying Connected to

Our Children

Chapter Leader: David Paul
tcfnorthshoreconnect@gmail.com

978-771-6345

Newsletter Editors: Eden Paul
eden.r.paul@gmail.com and
Regan Lamphier

603-264-9391

tcfnorthshorenews@gmail.com
Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle

978-532-2736

TIMOTHY GLENDINNING

In Tim's Memory

It will be 7 years on September 5th since we last saw your beautiful smile. I have seen time over time how much your smile has touched so many people. I went to Pat's wedding yesterday; all of his family knew how much you meant to Pat and his family and almost everyone at the wedding. I know Pat was your friend, and he has visited me and your mom many, many times since that day. All your friends that were there mentioned some story about the early years; we had some good laughs reminiscing.

I think the lesson I learned yesterday at the wedding was 'you are still here' in the smiles, the laughs, the hearts of all the family, friends and those who heard about you. I admit it was sad, when the best man gave his toast, I pictured you up there and how I'm sure your smile would have lit up the room, and your words would have left everyone with a memory of Tim that lives on long into the future.

A few other things have happened that keep you around in our lives, and it makes me smile. Katherine is going back to college, and her new apartment number is 310, your last dorm number. Her new license plate number is 9-5 and she got her new car at 10:27, your birthday. I'm sure there are many more of these occurrences, but these were last week. Me and Katherine will do our regular thing on 9-5, go to ICC 6 th hole and plant flowers at your plaque: 'Another Day in Paradise' and then breakfast at Agawam, just like the last seven years and I hope for many more years.

We miss you and love you, and I love when you show up in our lives and let us know you are still with us 'In Tim's Memory'.

Love, Mom, Dad and Katherine



CONFESSIONS OF A LONG-TERM GRIEVER

Posted on October 1st, 2024

They say that childbirth is a pain you forget, but nobody ever says that about child death. Losing your child is like having a piece of broken glass jammed into your heart. Permanently. Over the years, the sharp edges are often worn smooth, like sea glass, and cut less sharply. You learn to breathe through the pain. You survive. But you certainly never forget. And the younger your child was when you lost them, the longer you live with the remembering.

It has been 22 years now since the terrible day when our fifteen-month-old son, Noah, was run over in my in-law's driveway. Noah was our fourth child and my husband and I were 35 years old, still getting our marriage, family, and careers on track, when our world was shattered. It has also been 21 years since the day, nine months after Noah's death, when our fifth child, Jonah, was stillborn. We buried two babies in the space of ten months. And two decades later, we are still recovering. In many ways, we will mourn their absence for the rest of our lives.

I'm pretty sure two decades qualifies me as a long-term griever. Certainly, there was a time when I never thought I'd last this long. Whenever I attend a TCF conference and they ask for a show of hands, although I'm much younger than the oldest bereaved parents in attendance, I'm definitely among the longest. Indeed, those of us who lose our children to miscarriage or stillbirth, or as infants or toddlers, will likely live for many decades with our grief. We are the ones for whom that blessed "normal" life we once knew was shorter than the one we'll live long after we've crawled through the valley of the shadow of death. We are the bread and butter of the grief world, the stalwart attendees of support groups and conferences forever after our children's funerals are over. We will live to power wash the lichens growing on their gravestones, time and again, as the trees we planted in their memories reach ever closer to the sky.

Part of my responsibility as a long-term griever is to assure the newly bereaved that they, too, will survive and, yes, even thrive, again. Which is what we all need to hear when our worlds come crashing down around us. But there will always be work to do. As much as I hope that some day I'll wake up to find all of my rough edges worn smooth, that day has yet to dawn. Jagged shards keep breaking off, exposing sharp, shiny edges. Some are new cracks, but some are the same old worn spots I've glued back together many times. And I must confess to three that I find myself having to repair, again and again. Forgiveness. Anger. Regret. All have persisted. And along with cupboards full of things considered fragile, like wedding china and crystal, it seems I'll have a relationship with these three nouns for far longer than I ever had my sons.

F is for Forgiveness and I feel like I've earned a PhD in this particular field of study. Noah was run over by my sixteen-year-old niece, which was an accident. But that didn't make it any easier for me to forgive her. Especially when she didn't take responsibility for her actions, nor were there any apparent consequences. Jonah's death resulted in a medical malpractice lawsuit in which we prevailed. But that didn't mean the doctor took responsibility, either. On the contrary, she fought us in court. I teach my kids that there are three parts to an apology: "I'm sorry," "I did this," and "Here's how can I try to make it up to you." The people responsible for the deaths of our sons said none of those things, but we couldn't move forward without figuring out some way to forgive for our own sake. I have learned that forgiveness isn't necessarily forever. It's fluid. Relationships

change over time, things resurface, and sometimes the people we forgive are lost to us forever. Sometimes self-preservation means excommunicating people we once loved. Sometimes the people we need to forgive are ourselves. We can talk all day about the “if only’s” because we all loved our children more than ourselves and “if only” we’d known better, we would have done better. We’ve all learned the hard way that we’re not in control. It’s not our fault. We are only human. Extending that grace to others becomes our mandate, difficult as it may be, even if we simply stand on the shore and shout it out to the sea.

One of the many disappointing things we experienced in our hour of need was that the people we expected would be present for us didn’t show up. And yet, they’re still in our lives all these years later. People don’t always behave the way we think they will. Sometimes they behave much, much worse. Conversely, others show up whom we never expected, strangers even. And so we learn to be grateful for the kindness of strangers, to embrace the gifts we do receive. And for the things we don’t, we try to relinquish our expectations and forgive.

Sometimes we are still Angry. Yes. We are. Anger still exists, right in between what we’ve lost and what remains, and how the world goes on, regardless. We might be angry with people, like family and friends, or with institutions, like the medical system or insurance companies, or with the higher power seated on the throne of our particular house of worship. We might not be angry but our anger might be triggered by what people feel the need to say, even all these years later. We may still be angry about the specific circumstances of our child’s death or the fact that people’s attitudes haven’t changed or that the people responsible are still driving around or practicing medicine. Or we might be angry about people’s behavior towards us. We might feel they treat us like pariahs, like we’re the problem and it’s our fault that our child died. We’ll always be “those people”. And that’s why they can’t be our friends or let their child sleep over at our house.

But we have to remember that others are trying to find the fault line, to rationalize why this would never happen to them. Even though all of us, here, know that it could. Sometimes we have to talk ourselves off the ledge. It’s okay to throw yourself a tiny pity party. But when the party ends, sweep up the mess and move on to a happier place.

Regret is really difficult to live with. It’s insidious, seeping deep down inside of us and hiding in our cells, erupting as broken heart syndrome, digestive disorders, or hypertension. When Noah died I remember thinking if anything should cause cancer, it’s this. And maybe it will, some day. In the meantime, live with our remorse we must. Regardless of the circumstances, we all failed, as parents, to protect our children. And we have to make our peace with that.

Regret may last forever but time creates the space to live with it and cushion the blow. So, breathe. Every time we inhale deeply, straight into the anguish we’re avoiding, and then exhale with gusto, we release a little of whatever we’re holding onto. And we create a tiny space within which we can replace our sorrow with joy. Then we can begin, again, to smile, laugh, and enjoy our lives.

We are all works in progress. Forgive yourself. Release your anger. Manage your regrets. Over and over, again. Rub those broken edges between your bloody fingers until they’re worn smooth. Every day is a new day. Keep gluing yourself back together. As Leonard Cohen said, “There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

Kelly Kittel is the author of *Breathe, a Memoir of Motherhood, Grief, and Family Conflict*, and has been published in many magazines and anthologies, including *Three Minus One: Stories of Parents’ Loss and Love*. She speaks about grief and loss and presents annually at TCF conferences. Her TEDx talk can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11oA3w7JcTg> and her website is www.kellykittel.com.



September Birthdays


Robert Joseph Biondo son of Lorraine & Robert Biondo
Joey Bolivar son of Reggie and Cindi Bolivar
Derek Anthony Broughton son of Edward and Louise Broughton
Jessica Cormier daughter of Walter Cormier and Barbara Melesciuc & sibling of Nicole Cormier
Bryan Robert Cadigan son of Debbie Daly
Kelly Dawkins Lavigne daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins
Shane Lambert grandson of Irene Lambert
Erik Sean Rakos son of Frances Rakos
Glenn Buttrick son of Heidi Scott
Marquis Bergendahl son of Pauline and Chris Whynot
Michael Sverdlove son of Harry and Grace Sverdlove
Scott Peterson son of Tim and Parry Peterson
Peter Costas son of Barbara Costas, sibling of Alainie Costas
Nicholas Charles Erbafina, son of Susan and Charles Erbafina sibling of Jackie Erbafina
Ryan Sherman Loughlin son of Cynthia Sherman
Alyssa Rose Conte daughter of Janice and David Conte
Kyra Grace Koman daughter of Kathy and Stu Koman
Ashley St Onge daughter of Rick and Chris St Onge
Victor DeMacedo son of Patricia Dos Santos
Aderson James Elam son of Lynette Elam
Renee Mithen daughter of Kathleen Ravagno
Madeleine Elise Fox daughter of Elizabeth Fox
Shea Thomas Patno son of Tim and Desiree Patno
Kevin Gannon Sibling of Alice and Gil Costa
Justin McLeod son of Kim McLeod
David Marsh son of Marilyn Marsh
Justin Pappas-Kirk son of Lauri Pappas-Kirk and Peter Kirk
Jake Straw son of Michelle Straw
Erin McLaughlin daughter of Jan McLaughlin
Sidney Mae Olson daughter of Mary Beth Ellis and Eric Olson
Joshua Koen son of James and Joanne Koen



September Angel Dates

James Vincent Barreira son of Susan Barreira
Nicholas Alden Chittick son of Joann Chittick
Alfredo Alexis Trejo son of Alfredo and Lilliam Trejo
Kelly Dawkins Lavigne daughter of Frank and Maureen Dawkins
Harrison Andrew Lambert son of Gregory and Sigrid Lambert
Aaron DiBella son of Suzanne DiBella
Lia Madigan daughter of Maile and Daniel Madigan
Sarah Nicoll Boyle daughter of Jackie and Mark Nicoll
Mark Jepson sister of Shannon Kaiser
Daniel Edwards brother of Rebecca Edwards
Timothy Glendinning son of Tim and Barbara Glendinning
Brendan Burgess son of Catherine and Bill Burgess
Dillon Patrick Dwyer son of Wayne Dwyer
Benjamin Clark son of Nancy Wescott
Michael Glionna son of Terry Glionna
Lindsey Dias daughter of Bruce Dias
Joshua Williams son of Donna Williams
Gregory Stames son of Donna Bouley
AJ Ryan son of Shirley Loranger
Jillian Anne Sullivan daughter of Jacqueline Sullivan
Timothy Burke son of Anna Bourque
Philip Reddy Jr. son of Philip Reddy
Dennis Costa Sibling of Alice and Gil Costa
Edward Chretien son of Donna Chretien
David Marsh son of Marilyn Marsh
Jason Dube son of Eileen Rosato
Julianna Edel sister of Katharine Edel

Gram Bazyliniski son of Dennis Bazyliniski
 Robert Alan Greenwell son of Celeste Sullivan
 Desmond Michael Connors son of Jenny Connors

	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

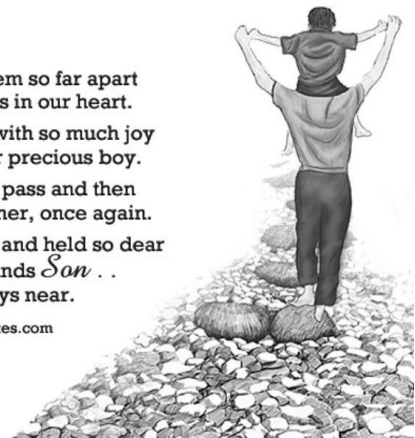
In order to help cover our chapter website fees, we invite our members to sponsor our chapter website for 1 month in memory of their children, grandchildren or siblings. The monthly website sponsor donation is \$25 per member and the maximum number of sponsors per month is 2. Sponsors may post a message 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.



Although we seem so far apart
 Son, you're always in our heart.
 You filled our lives with so much joy
 To us you were our precious boy.
 A little while shall pass and then
 We will see each other, once again.
 Loved, remembered and held so dear
 In hearts and minds *Son* . . .
 you're always near.
 all-greatquotes.com





Love Notes



We love them.
 We miss them.
 We grieve them.
 And so, we live our lives
 to make them proud.



Their Memory Stays

Although they have passed on,
 Their memory forever stays.
 Remember how they smiled,
 And the joy they always gave.
 We'll miss them all the time,
 And think of them every day.
 Their love filled the world -
 A love that will never fade.

LOVE • KNOW

“Love has no age, no limit;
 and no death.”

- JOHN GALSWORTHY

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 – September 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