



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

February 2025

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, 3/3/25
7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

Topic: How Our Relationships Have Changed

Wednesday, 3/19/25

In-Person Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

Topic: How Will I Be Feeling in the Years to Come?

-and-

Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM

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

Topic: Navigating Other Relationships Our Siblings Had

Wednesday, 3/26/25
7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

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

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Monday, 4/7/25
7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

Topic: Men / Women (split groups)

Chapter Leader: David Paul

978-771-6345

tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Eden Paul

eden.r.paul@gmail.com

Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle

tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com
 978-532-2736



ELIOT BENNETT

Happy 7th birthday, Eliot.

We find joy in reminders of you every day.

Thank you for watching over our family.

Love, Mommy and Daddy



-and-

GALE McLAUGHLIN

Gale, so hard to believe
your birthday on February 24th
this year you would be 58!

I will always miss those things
about having a daughter,

like we would talk often on the phone
and how often would you visit us here in Florida,
would you be a Mom now and happily married!



Don't get me wrong,
your three brothers are just great to us,
but I know from talking to other Moms here
that having a girl is just different!
Please know you will always be missed
and loved by Mom and Dad!

Also know that we feel so blessed
to have five granddaughters
and we often wonder how much you
and your YiaYia have to do with that!

So, life without you has not been easy at times,
but we will always feel fortunate that we are here
watching your brothers be good Dads and husbands!

We will always feel fortunate that we are here
and are lucky to have three daughters-in-law
and all those granddaughters.

So Happy Birthday sweet girl
and love from Mom, Dad and family!



“Leftovers Lament”

Written by Marian Siljeholm, for the 20th anniversary of her brother David’s accident

It was a perfect October morning. The kind that mom later called “911 weather” - because it was beautiful enough to crash planes into everything that was supposed to be concrete about the foundation of our lives. Beautiful enough for my 14 year old brother to ride his bicycle past a police officer who wasn’t doing his job, into a construction zone he wasn’t supposed to be in, through crossing gates that weren’t working, and in-front of a train, that was.

Not long after David died, a friend lost her brother, also suddenly, also violently. Amidst the darkness that is those first days, she asked me the question that I’d been asking for what was then six months, but without which I’d already forgotten what life looked like, “how do we get through this?”

In that moment, I suddenly understood the lies. I would have given anything to be able to look her in the eyes and promise that one day she’d wake up and it wouldn’t feel like she’d lost her childhood, or her ability to trust anyone again when they say everything happens for a reason, when they promise that time, heals, all. I loved her too much to tell her the truth, but also too much to lie, and so I said nothing.

6 months before that day, and 20 years before today, I stood before her and hundreds more friends and family members. Now strangers. Leftovers from a life that I no longer recognized. I was 10, and terrified. I read Shakespeare because nothing I wrote seemed good enough.

I didn’t have to say anything at the funeral, it wasn’t an obligation. But it was. I had to say something, because David would have. And that was how I’d make every decision to come.

It would take me a decade to understand it’s not about what he would’ve done. It’s about what he would’ve been proud to see me doing. It would take me another decade to be at peace with the fact that those might never be the same.

I spent most of my life trying to fill shoes that were never meant to fit because I thought that was how to honor him. That was how I’d keep him, and me, if I’m being honest, alive. An inhuman task to distract from the inhuman pain of his absence. And yet, the truth is that what’s kept him, and us, here, has never been who he would’ve been. It was who he was, and what he gave us in that; you.

As much as every birthday and anniversary that came after was about David, it was actually about those he left behind — relationships created in his presence and depended by his absence. He brought us to you, even those of you who never knew him, you love versions of us shaped as much by his presence as his absence, and so he stays with us, when we are with you.

My grandmother was a wise, well read, and witty soul, but you couldn’t call her a loving woman. And yet, it would be her words on the subject, penciled in a book, that would represent David for me, years after they were both gone. “Love” she wrote, “to make grow.”

In death, David taught us in a way that does not allow for forgetting, the most important lesson about life: that it is fleeting. He is the source of our capacity to love and perhaps rarer, to appreciate, deeply. I can't thank him for these things, but I finally understand that honoring him means not living a life diminished by grief for his absence, but one deepened by his presence.

20 years later, I wish I could go back to that moment where I said nothing, and tell my 10 year old friend and 10 year old self that it's not your job to know how to get through this—no one does. To tell them that your job is simply not to waste your life obsessing over who's not here, and to focus on who is, because they are how you will get you through this. Because that is how we did.

HEART CONNECTIONS – GRIEF AND OUR SENSES

Posted on February 24th, 2025

Grief is defined as the emotional response that follows loss. While grief is intensely emotional, it is also physical, psychological, and spiritual. Most bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents experience these multifaceted aspects of grief. Many bereaved people also feel a sharpening of their senses when the connection to their loved one grows in new ways outside of their physical presence.

Helen Keller said, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart." Although each person's process through loss is unique, bereaved people often feel their loved ones who died in new and surprising ways through one of our five biological senses. These are the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

I have these experiences frequently. For example, my son Connor was very connected to nature. He loved campfires and the challenge of making a fire the old-fashioned way by creating a spark with natural tinder. We shared many meaningful times around a fire. On several occasions, when I was feeling particularly sad or lost with my grief, I had an unexplainable pungent smell of campfire that had no clear reason to be present.

Connor was also a passionate pianist from a very young age. I've had numerous occurrences when I heard Beethoven's *Für Elise*, one of Connor's favorites, or another musical piece he loved playing, at just the right moment when my heart and spirit needed lifting. These incidences have happened through all five of my senses, and many bereaved parents share similar beautiful stories.

Not everyone experiences these connections, yet they can be tremendously meaningful and comforting to those who do. Keeping a journal to track these may be helpful to reflect on at other times when aching waves of grief may return. Other people may suggest that these situations are coincidences or efforts to not "let go." The perceptions of others and whether these events are rationally explainable are not what matters. Meaning and value are found in the peace and comfort of feeling a profound connection to our child, sibling, or grandchild and a deeper understanding of our existence.

By SHARI O'LOUGHLIN



 **February Birthdays** 

Andrew Adams Wilder son of Mark and Betty Wilder
Alfonso Daniel Sisneros son of Bob & Laura Reich
Shane Patrick Murphy son of Karen and Kevin Murphy
Scott Ronald Nagel son of Fiona Nagel
Catherine Cann daughter of Anna Bourque
Lorin Beth Bennett daughter of Judith Bennett
Ryan Covino son of Linda and Bill Covino
Christopher Taatjes son of Patricia Taatjes
Talia Rose Ronga daughter of Debra Ronga
Brendan Burgess son of Catherine and Bill Burgess
Christopher Genna son of Joseph & Leslie Genna
Paul A. Nestor son of Geri & Bob Gatchell
Eliot Lee Bennett son of Eric and Elizabeth Bennett
Lisa Marie Norco daughter of Roberta Deputat
Gale McLaughlin daughter of Joan & Frank McLaughlin
Daniel Noah (Danny) Fine son of Gail and Stephen Fine
Julia Ciampa daughter of Julie Brachanow
Virgilio Dejesus son of Sara Dejesus
Diane Buckley daughter of Anna Bourque
Sean Michael Reynolds son of LouAnne Reynolds
Julianna Edel sister of Katharine Edel
Christopher Burnett son of Annmarie Conway
Ty Moughan son of Liz Moughan
Thelma Zhecheva daughter of Eva Zhecheva




 **February Angel Dates** 

Christopher Burke son of Dotty and David Burke
Christopher Michael Rollins son of Nancy & Rick Rollins
Olivia Mary Marchand daughter of Jody Marchand
Ryan James Gilligan son of Paula Gilligan
Cadyn Nathaniel Douglas son of Cheryl Coss and Andre Douglas
Lorin Beth Bennett daughter of Judith & Michael Bennett, sibling of Allison and Pamelyn
John Queenan son of Margie Queenan
Christopher Warner Fennelly son of Laurie Malonson
Christopher Taatjes son of Patricia Taatjes
Patrick Barry son of Joanne Barry
Julia Ciampa daughter of Julie Brachanow
Zachary Doyle Hilton son of Patricia Doyle
Robert Hale Tavares son of Lorraine Snow
Robert Kagacha son of Sarah Kagacha
Jaxton Donais nephew of Kayla Welch
Anthony Travalini son of Anne Travalini
Mario Miller son of Maria Salles
Christopher Fennelly son of Laurie Malonson & George Fennelly
Eric Kronk son of Kathy and Walter Kronk
Andrea Martocchia son of Diana and Paul Martocchia
Ella Rose Biggio daughter of William and Allison Biggio
Jason Dixey son of Sandy & Barry Dixey
Kyra Grace Koman daughter of Kathy and Stu Koman
Renee Mithen daughter of Kathleen Ravagno
Sheryl Kelley daughter of Donna and Paul Maloney
Madeleine Elise Fox daughter of Elizabeth Fox
Kevin Gannon and Raymond Moyette siblings of Alice and Gil Costa
Daniel Harriman son of Cindy Collin
Tyler Fountain son of Kimberly Chandler
Tina Lee Ducharme daughter of Deb Linnehan
Calvin Gil son of Julie Sheaves
Justin Pappas-Kirk son of Lauri Pappas-Kirk and Peter Kirk
Kevin Gannon Sibling of Alice Costa
Teagan Carey Jennings Daughter of Ryan and Angela Jennings



Tyrell Trouville son of Holly Trouville

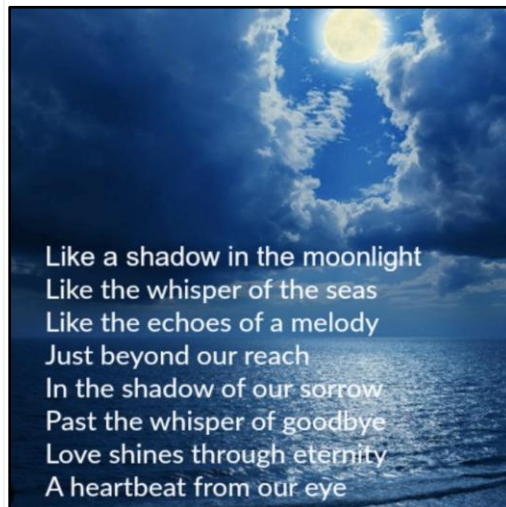
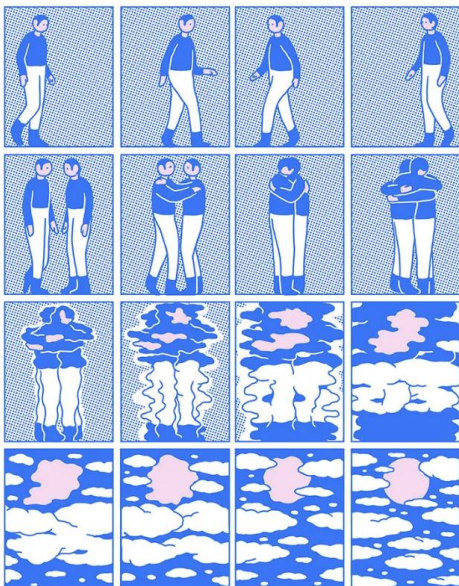
	Our telephone friends are here to help you if you feel the need to connect with someone outside of our usual meeting night. We are not professionals – we are all bereaved parents seeking to find a way through our grief. Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers.	
Beverly	Carmen 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 signup sheets are also available at our monthly in-person meetings.



Like a shadow in the moonlight
 Like the whisper of the seas
 Like the echoes of a melody
 Just beyond our reach
 In the shadow of our sorrow
 Past the whisper of goodbye
 Love shines through eternity
 A heartbeat from our eye

“Sometimes I just look up, smile and say 'I know that was you'”

“We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea—whether it is to sail or to watch it—we are going back from whence we came.”
 —JOHN F. KENNEDY



Love Notes



Loving Donation from Judith Bennett and family,

In Loving Memory Lorin Beth Bennett,

Birthday February 27th

Angel Date February 27th



“There are those who sprout
their roots and grow.
There are those who
spread their wings and fly”

“We bereaved are not alone.
We belong to the largest
company in the world - the
company of those who
have known suffering.”

HELEN KELLER



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

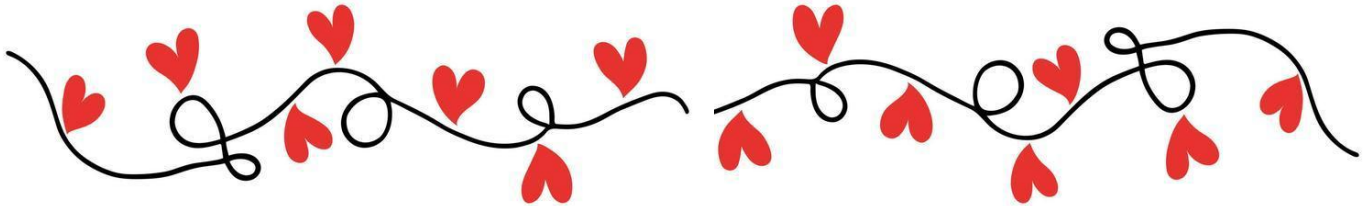
Message:

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 – February 2025



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