



The Compassionate Friends

North Shore-Boston Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Newsletter

June 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 griever 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.

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The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
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PH: 630-990-0010
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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

Upcoming Meetings

Saturday, 7/5/25

4:00 PM

Soup Kitchen Volunteer Opportunity

The Dwelling Place

523 Main Street

Woburn, MA 01801

For more information, contact **Pat Powell**

Monday, 7/7/25

7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Wednesday, 7/16/25

In-Person Meeting - 7:00 PM

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

Topic: Finding Hope After Loss

-and-

Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM

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

Topic: Does the Way Our Siblings Died Affect Our Grief?

Wednesday, 7/23/25

7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

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

Topic: Open Sharing Session

Chapter Leader: David Paul

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REBECCA KNIGHT

Dearest Rebecca,
It has been eleven years now
since you crossed over to Heaven.
Even though we so terribly miss
your physical form,
we are so wonderfully aware
of your spiritual presence!
Thank you babygirl
for the abundance of signs and for
helping Grammy with her recent ordeal.
You are a gift from God
and we cherish the memories
and savor the communications.

With grateful hearts,
Mom and Dad

-and-

JASON M. DIXEY

Jay,
Happy heavenly birthday.
You are so very loved
and will forever be
on our minds and in our hearts.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Adam and Riley





BEAUTY IN BROKENNESS

Posted on April 30th, 2025

In the English language, we have words to describe a person who has experienced loss at the death of another. Someone whose spouse has died is called a widow or widower. A child who has been left parentless is an orphan. But nowhere in our common tongue is there a word for a person who has lost their child.

In Sanskrit, there is a word ‘Vilomah,’ which means “out-of-order.” It is the closest thing I’ve found to describing the condition of a bereaved parent such as I.

During the early morning hours of June 21, 2019 I received a phone call from my daughter’s half-brother. His voice was calm, but somber. “Mark, there’s no easy way to say this.” Instantly, I knew. My 25-yr-old daughter Makenna had died. In the time it took him to speak those eight words, I became a vilomah, a person whose life would, from that moment on, be permanently out-of-order.

My daughter’s life struggle was at an end, but my journey of grief was just beginning.

Only a few weeks after her death, I joined a closed Facebook group dedicated to bereaved parents. In the months that followed, it proved to be a godsend. I have learned much from reading the stories of others who’ve lost their children and taken to heart the insights they have gained along the way. It has been a safe place for me to share my own experience and in so doing provide a measure of comfort to those who, in becoming new members as I once was, are thankful for a group that nobody ever wanted to be a part of.

One morning, I visited the group page to find a new post which read, “What have you done to get your life back in order?” Immediately, my mind went to that word, ‘vilomah’ and I responded by saying that my life would forever be out-of-order. In a moment, grief became a permanent fixture in the landscape of my life and I had accepted that. Many others shared the same sentiment.

It is important to understand that a life which has been shattered to pieces can never be put back in order. The real challenge, as I see it, is to embrace this new reality and to try and find some beauty in the brokenness. But this level of awareness did not come to me early or easily.

As it has turned out, it was a simple piece of jewelry that helped show me the way.

Among my daughter’s personal possessions was a heart-shaped pendant made of porcelain, dark brown

in color and highly polished. But what made it unique among all others was a clearly visible and slightly jagged vein of bright gold running through its center. It was an example of kintsugi, a Japanese art form in which a broken piece of ceramic is repaired with lacquer and where the cracks are highlighted with the application of gold dust, rendering the piece even more beautiful than before. Kintsugi is often viewed as a metaphor for restoration and transformation.

My daughter struggled with alcoholism. The last few years of her life were a continuous cycle of sobriety, relapse, hospitalization, rehab and recovery. I gave her the pendant when she had completed her first 30-day rehab at the age of 22. She cherished it and wore it often, sharing with others at AA meetings its message of hope and healing.

A few weeks following the Life Celebration we held at her mother's house, I asked family members if anyone had found the pendant among her belongings. I was crestfallen to learn nobody had seen it and that in all likelihood it was gone forever. But a few days later, I received a call that Makenna's half-sister had found it and I could pick it up at any time. I was tearful with joy!

I have always had a respect for the wisdom imparted by certain Japanese arts and traditions. What is different about Kintsugi in contrast to other types of 'broken pot' metaphors is the deep philosophical and aesthetic practice that underlies the art form. Especially, the concept of creating beauty out of brokenness.

The process does not attempt to disguise the damage, but rather renders the cracks as beautiful and strong. The precious veins of gold are there to emphasize that fault lines have a merit all of their own. I now view these fault lines as my faith lines and I have learned to see my heart as broken open rather than broken apart. As a result, I am stronger, wiser, kinder, and able to love deeper.

For me, the gold dust added to the adhesive mix has come to represent acts of gratitude and love – gratitude for the things that remain in my life, and also the love I continue to feel for my daughter.

Makenna's pendant now hangs above my drawing table in the studio at my house. I see it every time I pull up my chair and am reminded of something Ernest Hemmingway once wrote, "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places." The places where I have known brokenness and experienced healing are the places where I have empathy and compassion for others who are broken. They are the places where I have a story to tell and where I have credibility to minister to the needs of others. They are the places where I can speak hope and shine light into the darkness . . . and find beauty in the brokenness.

BY: Mark Mason, he is a retired book illustrator living in Whittier, CA. Since the death of his daughter, he has become an advocate for bereaved parents whose children struggled with substance. His favorite quote from Mother Teresa, "Few of us can do great things, but we can all do small things with great love."




June Birthdays

Christopher John Pope Son of Carmen and Jeff Pope
Alexander John Whipple son of Richard & Nancy Whipple
Jason Dixey son of Sandy & Barry Dixey
Harrison Andrew Lambert son of Gregory & Sigrid Lambert
Eric Kronk son of Kathy & Walter Kronk
Jeannie O'Hare daughter of Jean and Tom O'Hare
Donald Tottingham son of Mal and Bobbie Tottingham
Tanya Anne Phillips daughter of Marilyn & George Phillips
Jason Michael Sobanek son of Karen Cioff
Joey Brancato son of Andy Brancato
Marc Ouellette son of Donna Marcotte and Bob Oullette
Ella Rose Biggio daughter of William & Allison Biggio
Roger Gregory Costa son of Alice & Gil Costa
Susan Rita Bean daughter of Ellen Bean
Rebecca Jean Knight daughter of Betty and Owen Knight
Danielle Lynn Acoin daughter of Susan & Michael Acoin
Steven Ronan son of Susan Eldred
Michael Joseph Glionna son of Terry Glionna
Jackson Mace son of Jeanne Mace brother of Lauren Steeves
Alison Neenan Herman daughter of Christine Neenan
Alicia Carol Gillespie daughter of Carol Fiore
Seraphina Harrell Daughter of Thomas and Rene Harrell
Kaleigh Rainone daughter of Colleen and Dean Jaynes
Daniel Harriman Son of Cindy Collins
Michael Barrett son of Tony Barrett and Susan Greco
Bernard Brown III son of Bernie Brown
Gram Patrick Bazylnski son of Dennis and Catherine Bazylnski

June Angel Dates

Christopher John Pope son of Carmen and Jeff Pope
Andrew Adams Wilder son of Mark and Betty Wilder
Jon Paul Rahall son of Bernadette Rahall
Darien Sanford-Castro son of Diane Sanford
Todd MacDonald son of John and Janet MacDonald
David Eric Czarnota son of Karen Czarnota
James Kimball Carlsen son of Kathy Carlsen
Amy Elizabeth Palmetier daughter of Judy & Joe Palmetier
Kara Lynne Irving daughter of Jean and Jerry Irving
Bobby Moore son of Jeff Moore
Hunter Fredrick Siebel grandson of Vita and Gordon Trainor
Brent Robert DiLibero Barbara and Bob DeLibero
Alison Neenan Herman daughter of Christine Neenan
Roger Gregory Costa son of Alice and Gil Costa
Susan Rita Bean daughter of Ellen Bean
Rebecca Jean Knight daughter of Betty and Owen Knight
Danielle Lynn Acoin daughter of Susan and Michael Acoin
Stephen Baglioni Son of Peter Baglioni
Megan Sawyer Daley daughter of Kathy and Dan Daley
James (Jimmy)Reppucci sibling of Crystal Reppucci
Benjamin Thomas Huxtable grandson of Alaina & Peter Huxtable
Charlee Charette Daughter of Christopher and Samantha Charette
Tom Alfieri son of Diane Alfieri
Lucas Kump grandson of Linda Bump
Charlie Carmillo son of Paul & Amie Carmillo
Mary Curran Daughter of Tom and Catherine Curran, sibling of Ryan, Kelly & Meghan
Bernard Brown III son of Bernie Brown
David Panzeri son of Frank and Louise Panzeri
James Lee Aiguier Jr son of Lori Walker
Stephen Joseph Troncoso son of Judy Troncoso

	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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR MEMBERS

We will be volunteering at a soup kitchen at the Dwelling Place on Saturday, July 5, 2025

For More Details Click Here: [Volunteer Opportunity](#)

TCF SUMMER BBQ

Saturday, July 26, 2025

11:30 AM

Stage Fort Park

Gloucester, MA

For More Details Click Here: [TCF Barbecue Details](#)

WALK TO REMEMBER TEE SHIRTS

The TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter annual Walk To Remember will take place on 9/21/25.

For more Details Click Here: [TCF Walk to Remember](#)

WALK TO REMEMBER TEE SHIRTS

The TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter annual Walk To Remember will take place on **9/21/25**. More information regarding this event will be posted on our website in July. If you would like to order a tee shirt for this year's Walk To Remember, click on this link:

[Walk To Remember Tee Shirts](#)

This link will be active from **5/29/25** through **8/29/25**. The shirts that are ordered will be shipped to Tim Glendinning. Tim will then distribute the tee shirts at Ipswich River Park in North Reading before the Walk begins.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Tim:

tglendinning@crowuniform.com

- **[\(908\) 902-8631](tel:(908)902-8631)**



Love Notes



In Memory of Brianna Paul

It's funny how life doesn't turn out the way we expect it to, but with all the bumps in the road, warts and aggravation, life turns out exactly as it is supposed to. I miss Brianna with every breath I take but I know she was supposed to live 20 years.....her life was HER life.

I choose to honor and know she lived a full life. My kid had the biggest personality, sense of humor and was brutal with her words. It was hard being her mom at times, she stirred lots of controversy, she was an easy target of blame and very much let her opinion be known.

The reality was, she was a true person, nothing about her was fake, she was beautiful, smart and struggled in a sizeist world. Brianna knew things well ahead of her time and what really mattered in life. Above all Brianna was a fierce defender of people, she stood up for the underdog even if it caused her to have a target on her back.

Like many other extraordinary talented people that died young, Brianna Paul was beyond talented, her acting skills were amazing, she had a perfect musical ear and could play almost any instrument by ear.

It's been 16 years since Brianna died, a lifetime ago and just yesterday. To say I am grateful is a vast understatement; to have had her for the 20 years I did ... what a blessing.

Everything in life happens exactly the way it is supposed to whether we like or not. The challenge for me was to give myself the grace to grieve, stop being so harsh on myself and accept it's okay to be okay. Every second of every day is a learning opportunity, we can accept that and grow or deny it and stagnate.

Brianna's Mom

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**

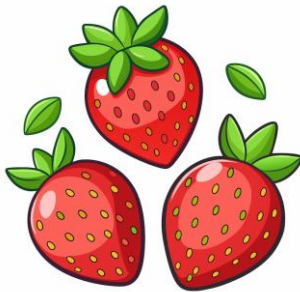
Message:

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 – June 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