



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *North Shore-Boston Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

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 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**

## **April 2026**

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**Sunday, 5/17/26**  
**1:00 - 4:00 PM**

#### **SPRING EVENT**

**Wednesday, 5/20/26**

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

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

**Topic:** Coping With Everyday Life (feel free to bring a photo of your child)

-and-

#### **Sibling Group Online Video Meeting - 7:30 PM**

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

**Topic:** Open Sharing Session

**Wednesday, 5/27/26**  
**7:00 PM**

#### **Online Video Meeting**

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

**Topic:** Family Vacations and Gatherings

**Monday, 6/1/26**  
**7:00 PM**

#### **In-Person Meeting**

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

**Topic:** The Emotional Roller Coaster

Chapter Leader: David Paul

978-771-6345

[tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com)

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Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle

[tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com)





## **ALEXANDER The Great WHIPPLE**

Dear Alexander,  
I can't believe it has been 15 years  
since we said goodbye to you.  
We miss you so much.  
We wonder who you would be today  
as an almost 17 year old young man.  
I am sure you would be kind and caring  
and a wonderful big brother  
to Asher and Elizabeth.  
We love you and think of you always.

Love, Mommy, Daddy, Asher & Elizabeth

*-and-*

## **JULIA ANN FORMAN**

Dear Julia,  
We miss you.  
We miss your hearty laugh;  
your delicious cooking;  
your love; your kindness & just you.  
Your nieces, Evie & Claire,  
still talk about you after 5 years.  
The grief comes in waves;  
ebbing & flowing.  
Sometimes the water is calm  
and sometimes it's overwhelming.  
  
We love you so much.  
Mom, Bob, Josh, Briana & the girls.



# THE TRANSFORMATIVE NATURE OF GRIEF

*Posted on April 10th, 2026*

“I think I have had the wrong destination in mind.” These words have stayed with me for many years. They were spoken by a mom who trusted me with her story of profound loss, nine years after the death of one of her two sons. It was her one (and only) counseling session with me. She started the session by explaining that she had been trying for nine years to get her life back to the way it was before her son died to no avail and decided to try counseling to see if that might help to restore her.

For the next 50 minutes, I listened as she shared about her son’s death, his life, and her life with him. She talked about what life was like before he died and what life had been like over the past nine years since his death. There is something sacred about holding space for a person’s story. And there is a power that people gain when they can tell that story without interruption while being truly heard.

As we came to the end of our time together, she sat back, paused, and reflected. Then she said, “You know, hearing myself talk over the past hour, I think I have had the wrong destination in mind. I have been trying to get my life back to the way it was before my son died, but I don’t think that is possible. I would give anything to have my son back. But my life is different now. I am different. I think I need to figure out how I live my life now that he has died – how to carry my grief, honor his memory, and live my life all at the same time.” Though we scheduled a follow up session, she contacted me a week later to cancel, sharing that this epiphany was what she needed and had made all the difference.

Many of us have had moments like this in our lives, an “ah ha” moment of clarity, when we realize something about ourselves or life that had previously escaped us. I was a bystander who was able to experience that moment with her. In the days and weeks after that session, a concept began to percolate in my mind. Namely, that grief is a transformational experience. Many of our constructs of healing focus on restoration or getting back to the way things were. Friends and family members often say things like, “I miss the old you.” What if, instead, we said, “let me introduce you to the new me.”

Consider, for a moment, how your grief has changed you, the way you think about life, what you prioritize, your values, beliefs, relationships, and so many other things. Learning to live again after profound loss is not somewhere behind us, it is in relationship to where we are now, where

we are going, and how we have been transformed by our grief. Grief is not a choice; it is a transformative experience we are living. The choice is not whether we will be transformed, the choice is how much we want to be a part of shaping that transformation. Profound loss shakes us to our core and one hard fought, messy, painful step at a time, we make the most intense, deep-set, impossible choices about how, who, and what our lives will look like now.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) exists to hold this type of space for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings living with profound loss. Thank you for trusting us with your story. Thank you to all who found solace in this space, then took up the mantle to turn around and hold this space for those coming behind you. There is power in listening and being heard. Wherever you might be in your grief today, keep reaching out, keep moving, and keep breathing. Take our hand, share your story with us, scream, cry, laugh, be angry, and whatever else you might need. Be an active participant in your own transformation. Share about your personal “ah ha” moments and how you have been transformed. Take someone else’s hand and hold their story with love and care. We are The Compassionate Friends, we do not walk alone.



## ANDY MCNIEL

Andy McNiel, MA, is an author, trainer, bereavement support professional, and non-profit leader with three decades of experience facilitating support groups and providing individual care to bereaved people of all ages. Andy currently serves as the CEO of the Compassionate Friends, a national non-profit supporting families after the death of a child. His years of service and executive leadership experience span hospice care, regional and national grief organizations, and creating a safe space for bereaved people to connect with others who understand. Andy is highly regarded as a presenter, educator, and thought leader on understanding grief and bereavement support. He lectures and keynotes extensively on topics related to grief, loss, and personal wellness. He is the author of "Understanding and Supporting Bereaved Children: A Practical Guide for Professionals," in addition to numerous chapters and articles on grief and loss across the lifespan. Andy is a member of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Advisory Board. He is a national trainer for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and a member of the International Workgroup on Death, Dying, and Bereavement. Andy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religion and a Master of Arts in Counseling.

## April Birthdays

Adam Calogero Lavoie son of Fernad Lavoie and Joyce Calogero Brother of Reid Lavoie

John Arthur Driscoll son of John and Susan Driscoll

Kristina Corina Latham daughter of Kerry and Kevin Latham sibling of Josh Latham

Charlotte Mae Martin daughter of Kara Paine

Thomas "Scott" Gray son of Laura Gray

Christopher Warner Fennelly son of Laurie Malonson & George Fennelly

Lia Madigan daughter of Maile and Daniel Madigan

Matthew Dalimonte son of Patti Dalimonte

Ryan James Gilligan son of Paula Gilligan

Jimmy Kiriakos son of Sandy Tsakirgis

Colin Ambrose McComber son of Shari McComber

Aaron Joseph DiBella son of Suzanne DiBella

Andrea Martocchia son of Diana and Paul Martocchia

Xavier Salaman son of Susan Salaman

Julia Ann Forman daughter of Patricia Foreman Powell and step daughter of Robert Powell

Daria Elise Pearlman daughter of Jill Pearlman

Edward Chretien son of Donna Chretien

Brandon Ste, Croix son of Andrea Green

Robert Alan Greenwell son of Celeste Sullivan



## April Angel Dates

Ricardo Melo son of David and Theresa Melo

Tanya Jean Duncan daughter of Dawn Lee Black and Dan Golan

Brian T Wilson son of Linda Wilson

Adam Calogero Lavoie son of Fernad Lavoie and Joyce Calogero Sibling of Reid Lavoie

Charlotte Mae Martin daughter of Kara Paine

Jennifer Gianocostas daughter of Skip Gianocostas and stepdaughter of Diane Gianocostas

Alexander John Whipple son of Richard and Nancy Whipple

Reid Robert Sacco son of Gene & Lorraine Sacco

Eric Hill son of Peggy & Tom Hill

Bryan Robert Cadigan son of Debbie Daly

Marquis Bergendahl son of Pauline and Chris Whynot

Craig Gentleman son of Mary and Jack Gentleman

Kenneth Barclay son of Rachel and Philip Barclay


Gabriel Feld son of Phyllis Feld

Lenardo Clement son of Muriel Clement

Delaney Marchant daughter of Kathy and Bob Marchant

Niamh Murphy sister of Olivia Murphy



	<p>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 professional - we are all bereaved parents seeking to find a way through our grief.</p> <p><b>Please be considerate in the timing of your calls to these volunteers</b></p>	
<b>Beverly</b>	<b>Carmen Pope</b> , son, 3 days old, anencephaly, and son, 11 years old, boating accident	<b>(978) 771-4942</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Sheila Thabet</b> , son, 19 years old, pedestrian accident, and son 20 years old, accidental overdose	<b>(781) 670-0335</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Melinda &amp; David Paul</b> , daughter, 20 years old, sudden cardiac arrest	<b>(978) 771-6345</b>
<b>Haverhill</b>	<b>Crystal Chambers</b> , sibling, 28 years old, cause unknown	<b>(508) 523-2810</b>
<b>Salem NH</b>	<b>Regan Burke</b> , son, 8 years old, pneumonia/ cardiac arrest	<b>(603) 264-9391</b>
<b>Winchester</b>	<b>Reenie McCormack</b> , son, 20 years old, drowning	<b>(781) 729-1878</b>
<b>Woburn</b>	<b>Nancy Whipple</b> , son 22 months old, cancer	<b>(781) 938-5840</b>
<b>North Andover</b>	<b>Cathrine Olson</b> , Daughter, 27, Pedestrian accident	<b>(978) 681-8341</b>

#### **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.



# Love Notes



How very quietly you tiptoed into our world, silently, only a moment you stayed.  
 But what an imprint your footprints have left upon our hearts.



**IT IS THE CAPACITY  
 TO FEEL CONSUMING GRIEF AND  
 PAIN AND DESPAIR THAT ALSO  
 ALLOWS ME TO EMBRACE LOVE AND JOY  
 AND BEAUTY WITH MY WHOLE HEART.  
 I MUST LET IT ALL IN.**

"When people ask me how many children I have I always talk about my daughter. As uncomfortable as it is to talk about a "dead baby" I feel that it is an injustice to her to not speak her name, or act as if she never existed. I will never forget my daughter, and will honour her by saying her name. She was here, she did exist, and she changed our lives forever."



*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 – April 2026



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.....**

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[tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com](mailto:tcfnoshorenews@gmail.com)