



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 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

August 2026

Upcoming Meetings

Wednesday, 8/26/26
7:00 PM

Online Video Meeting

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

Topic: Open Sharing Session with Photos of Your Child

Tuesday, 9/8/26
7:00 PM

In-Person Meeting

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

Topic: Facing Difficult Dates

Sunday, 9/13/26
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

WALK TO REMEMBER

Wednesday, 9/16/26

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 attend

Topic: Dealing With Other Family Members' Grief

Chapter Leader: David Paul

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ERIC HILL



Eric - it's so hard to believe
that you would be turning 30 years old!
I love that you always still visit us.
We miss you tons and
love you to the moon!
Happy Heavenly Birthday to the best son.



xoxo Mom

Brianna Lee Paul *an untamed life*

*you never lived your life to the pleasure of others
a wild child blazing her own path
with an honesty so bold it caused most of us to cower
you knowing but never fearing the aftermath
time has now created just enough space
to appreciate the truth unspoken
you were meant to part this measured realm
unbroken*

August Birthdays

Alfredo Alexis Trejo son of Alfredo & Lilliam Trejo
David Eric Czarnota son of Karen Czarnota z
Andrew Geljookian son of Nancy & John Geljookian
Eric Hill son of Peggy & Tom Hill
Glenn James McCloy son of June & Jim McCloy
Brianna Lee Paul daughter of David & Melinda Paul Sibling of
Eden and Erin Paul
Robert Hale Tavares son of Lorraine Snow
Victor Vogis son of Victor & Margo Vogis
Daniel Ronan son of Susan Eldred
Megan Sawyer Daley daughter of Kathy and Dan Daley
Julia Elizabeth Vanella daughter of Joseph Vanella, Jr.
Christopher Dennis Lane son of Marilyn Lane
Julian Cayer son of Matt & Lauren Cayer
Anthony Travalini son of Anne Travalini
Andrew Brooks Son of David and Waldina Cameron
Nicole Hufnagle daughter of Janet and Gary Hufnagle
Mathew Carr Son of Patty Carr & Brother of Sarah Carr
Quinlan Weekes son of Lindsay and Jaunel Weekes
Tritan James Rice son of Brian Rice
Peter Merrill son of Martha Merrill
Jade Anna Williamson daughter of Adam Williamson & Jenny
Chong
Joshua J. Williams son of Donna Williams
Mitch Lortz son of Jeff Lortz

Shaun Carnes son of Diane and Alan Pajak
Timothy Burke son of Anna Bourque
Alyssa M. Joy daughter of David Joy
Paulyne Mbowa daughter of Julius Mbowa
Shannon Walsh daughter of Kimberly and Kevin Walsh
Desmond Michale Connors son of Jenny Connors
James Luke Stammers son of Martha Schmitt

August Angel Dates

Derek Anthony Broughton son of Edward & Louise Broughton
John Arthur Driscoll son of John & Susan Driscoll
Geoffrey Gonzalez son of Iris Gonzalez
Amber Mace daughter of Tammy Mace
Gale McLaughlin daughter of Joan & Frank McLaughlin
SPC David Mulno son of Cathy and Harry Mulno, sibling of Alyssa Mulno
Jeannie O'Hare daughter of Jean & Tom O'Hare
Michael John Smithers son of Marnie Smithers
Katherine Stephanie Grant daughter of Laurie Grant
Jade Anna Williamson daughter of Adam Williamson & Jenny Chong
Mathew Carr Son of Patty Carr & Brother of Sarah Carr
Mitch Lortz son of Jeff Lortz

David John Santucci son of John & Marie Santucci
Colin Ambrose McComber son of Shari McComber
Steven Ronan son of Susan Eldred
Griffin Nathan Lamar son of Nicole and Nathan Lamar
Rosamond Leslie "Lindsey" Huntoon daughter of Louise Huntoon
Seth Bottari son of Steve and Sarah Bottari
Brooke Romswell niece of Susan Haggerty
Ziggy Prior Lowe son of Danielle Chiapella & Josh Lowe
Michael O'Connell nephew of Len and Louise Morrison
Frankie Simpson son of Carolyn Skane
Michael Barrett son of Tony Barrett and Susan Greco
Kayla Bell daughter of Stephen and Paulette Bell
Christopher Burnett son of Annmarie Conway
Ty Moughan son of Liz Moughan
Joshua Koen son of Joanne and James Koen and sibling of Jeremy Koen
Kory Ouellette Son of Steve and Maureen Ouellette
Matthew Ryan Sagarino son of Maria Sagarino



It's natural for people to enter and exit our lives at different times. As Brian A. Chalker wrote, each person serves a purpose, whether it be for a brief moment, a short period, or a lifetime. I've always considered myself fortunate to have a handful of close friends whom I could count on when life got me down, but it wasn't until I faced a tragic loss that I realized my inner circle was smaller than I had believed. This left me wondering: are people inherently selfish, or can they only empathize with circumstances they have encountered firsthand?

In 2017, my son passed away from an opioid overdose after a ten year battle with drug addiction. Some may argue that I should have been somewhat prepared for that day, but I wasn't. Unlike other families dealing with addiction who lived in constant fear of receiving that dreaded call, I never did. It wasn't because I refused to accept the reality of my situation, but simply because it seemed unimaginable to me that my son would die.

Throughout those ten years, I existed in a state of detachment from the world around me. To outsiders, it may have seemed like my life mirrored that of my friends, but it was far from it. I felt isolated and unable to relate to the routine of their lives. While they attended their sons' basketball games and cheered them on, I spent my days monitoring my son's activities and researching treatment centers. This relentless activity took a toll on me emotionally and I'd often daydream about what it would be like to have just one day of a "normal" life. I longed to share stories about my son's achievements rather than dodge questions when asked what he was doing and where he was applying to college. Despite the turbulence that encumbered my life I had always held on to the belief that one day my son would turn a corner and those dark days would be behind us. But sadly that day never came and at the age of twenty eight his life was cut short.

I suppose it was a mix of shock and refusal to accept the reality of my son's death, but what stands out in my memory the night my son passed is sweeping my living room floor. It's strange to think about now, but perhaps in

some odd way I was trying to make sense out of something which was completely out of my control. I suppose I was trying to impose a sense of order amidst the chaos.

A week after my son's funeral I left my NYC apartment to go for a walk. As I stepped outside I remember feeling as though I was punched in the gut as if I were a spectator watching from above, unable to recognize that it was me putting one foot in front of the other. Overnight the city that I loved felt strange and unfamiliar. I no longer belonged there. Even the air felt different. I turned around and went home, and for the next three years I drifted aimlessly. Thoughts or tasks could only hold my attention for five minutes before I'd lose interest. I spent my days replaying conversations in my head, reading my son's text messages and listening to his voice mails. How could he be gone when he felt so present?

Although I had experienced depression many times in my life, this was different. It was the one time in my life I couldn't give myself a pep talk and tell myself things would get better. I was now faced with the impossible task of finding a new identity. For far too long my life had been consumed by my son's addiction leaving little room for anything else. But now, as I grieved the loss of my child and accepted that happiness might never be within reach again, I had to confront the daunting question: Who am I now? I turned to my friends for support, but their conversations only made me feel even more distant and alone. They couldn't understand the intense emotions I was facing. Their usual words of comfort now seemed shallow and unhelpful, leaving me with a sense of emptiness.

Then in the midst of my grief the pandemic struck. Overnight my feelings of loneliness and despair were suddenly shared by the entire world. Surprisingly, as the death toll rose and society crumbled, I felt a sense of relief. I no longer had to justify my absence from society and no longer did I feel obligated to attend social functions or holiday dinners. Finally I could breathe a bit easier. The pressure had been lifted and I could melt into my solitude without appearing as though I had escaped voluntarily.

During that period, I came to a harsh realization about how people handle grief. I used to believe that those closest to me would always be there for support, but after my son's death, they slowly drifted away. Unlike other forms of loss that we encounter in life, such as losing grandparents, parents, or friends, the death of someone's child defies all understanding. It disrupts the natural course of life and leaves others struggling to understand and relate to. The truth is people simply navigate towards happiness and anything that challenges their comfort zone is often pushed aside.

The death of a child is a heartbreaking tragedy that most people prefer not to think about. It forces them to confront the possibility that it could happen to them or someone they love. The loss of my son was a devastating event that taught me the difficulty of giving sincere support during times of immense grief. It's only through facing our own tragedies that we can truly understand how to help others in their darkest moments. That's why it's important to keep in mind that when those closest to us distance themselves during our time of need, it is not a personal attack and in time we may even find it in our hearts to forgive them for their absence.

BY: ANDREA MAGDER

Andrea is a NYC-based writer and the founder of The Artist Lives Gallery, a nonprofit dedicated to showcasing the work of artists who passed without recognition. Previously, she worked as a writer and producer of independent films, as well as in film development. After

losing her son in 2017, she shifted her focus toward writing and advocacy, using her work to explore themes of grief, resilience, and purpose.



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

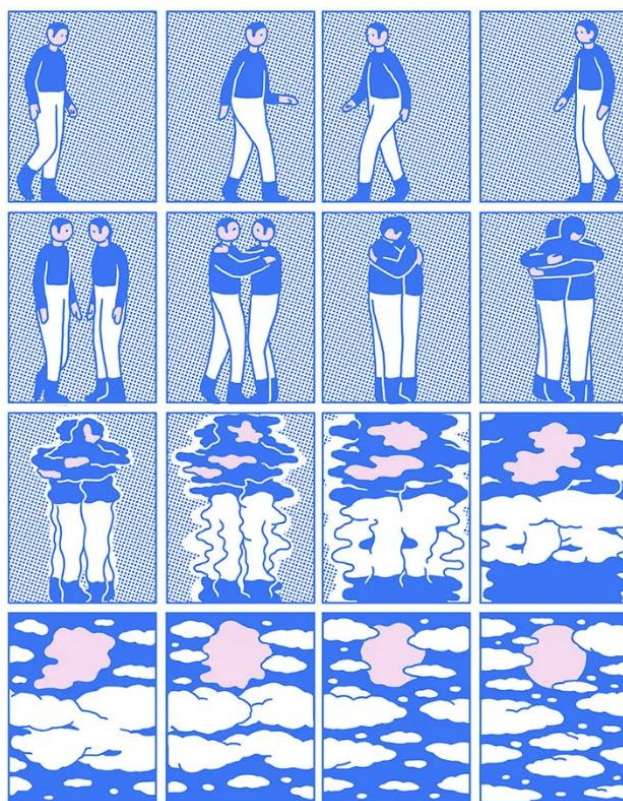
TCF North Shore-Boston Chapter Website Sponsorship

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.

Our Chapter is looking for a new Newsletter Editor. If any of our members are interested in helping out please feel free to email Dave at tcfnoshoreconnect@gmail.com.



Love Notes



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

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NEWSLETTER – August 2026



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