



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

July 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

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CARY & JAMIE THABET

My dear Cary and Jamie,

Another year passes,
and I feel your absence
in every part of it.

You are loved, you are missed,
and you remain the brightest joy
I ever knew.

Happy Birthday, my sweet boys.
You gave me a happiness
that will never be replaced,
and in losing you, a
sorrow that will never fade.

With all my love,
Mum

-and-

TOM POPE

Tom,

It is so surreal that 29 years have passed
since you were physically with us.
That being said, we totally believe and trust
that you are still with us and always will be.

Your brother, Dave, played in a golf
tournament on his and his twin brother,
Christopher's birthday.
He wrote Christopher's and your initials
on his golf ball before the match
and ended up hitting a hole in one.

You will forever be missed,
but always remembered by all of us . . .
your Mom and Dad, your siblings,
your aunts and uncles,
your cousins, your friends,
and now your nieces and nephew.

I have learned so much
over the past 29 years,
such that I now trust that life
has a beginning, but it has no end.

Your life will never end,
as long as you are always in our hearts;
there is no doubt that you
will forever be in our hearts.

Love, Mom, Dad,
Kelly, Ian, Tom, Nell & Kit,
Dave & Marisa



July Birthdays

Sheryl Lynn Becker daughter of Millie & Jerry Becker
David Conant Siljeholm son of Anita Siljeholm
Derek Frechette son of Janet Frechette
Edward Michael Hedrington son of Jo Hedrington
Tiffany Marie Hines daughter of Jeff and Debbie Hines
Reid Robert Sacco son of Gene & Lorraine Sacco
James Devlin Thabet son of Sheila & Khaire Thabet
Cary Thabet son of Sheila & Khaire Thabet
Wendy Kagan Snyder daughter of Billie and Sumner Kagan
Andrew W. Taylor son of Constance Taylor
Stephen Baglioni Son of Peter Baglioni
Rosamond Leslie "Lindsey" Huntoon daughter of Louise Huntoon
Michael Sawyer son of Diane Sawyer
Darcie Forrestall daughter of Sally and Tim Morse
Conor Bates son of Eileen Bates
Griffin Nathan Lamar son of Nicole and Nathan Lamar
Jax Gamal Lee Son of Aisha Lumumba
Ziggy Prior Lowe son of Danielle Chiapella & Josh Lowe
Michael O'Connell Nephew of Len and Louise Morrison
Daniel Rogers son of Donna Rogers
Marc Donovan son of Carol and Neil MacDonald
Brooke Romswell niece of Susan Haggerty
Seth Bottari son of Steve and Sarah Bottari
Robert Troiano son of Karen Troiano
Peter Thomas son of Jeanne Mace and brother of Lauren Steeves
Robert Maloney Son of Donna and Paul Maloney
Anthony Diaz son of Gail Scimone
Andre Luis Ribeirinha-Braga son of Dianne & Sergio Braga
Nancy Ellen Scotina Sibling of Jill Preshong
Anne Good sister of Mary Good
Daniel Edwards Brother of Rebecca Edwards
Mark Eric Jepson brother of Shannon Kaiser
Gabriel Feld son of Phyllis Feld
Calvin Gil son of Julie Sheaves
David Panzeri son of Larry and Louise Panzeri
Tyler Fountain son of Kimberly Chandler
Maela Murphy daughter of Jessa Malatesta
Adam Dixey son of Sandy and Barry Dixey

July Angel Dates

Lino J Brosco son of Leno and Emilia Brosco, sibling of Rose Ames
Christian E. Frechette grandson of Janet Frechette
Jared Linzey son of Sharyn & Tom Linzey
Thomas Hart (Tom) Pope son of Carmen and Jeff Pope
James Devlin Thabet son of Sheila & Khaire Thabet
Jordan Zaff son of Driss Zaff
Samantha Ruth Fargo daughter of William and Justine Fargo
Jax Gamal Lee Son of Aisha Lumumba
Tyler Weymouth Sibling of Andrew Weymouth
Amber Zapatka Daughter of Lise and Ed Zapatka
Brian Robert Pellegrino nephew of Alyse and Joe Bonfiglio
Christopher Drelich son of Zib and Bonnie Drelich
Brendan Tobin son of Marie and Tim Tobin
Joseph Blasetti Jr Son of Donna and Joseph Blasetti
Seraphina Harrell daughter of Rene Harrell
Shea Thomas Patno son of Tim and Desiree Patno
Ian Douglas Byrnes son of Julie Krakauer
Shaun Carnes son of Diane and Alan Pajak
Jake Straw son of Michelle Straw
Joseph Saidah son of Mary Saidah
Justin Joseph Hartford son of Jen Smith
Patrick Lynch son of Susan Lynch



Charles Armand Robitaille son of Elizabeth Robitaille
Adam Dixey son of Sandy and Barry Dixey
Colleen Waite Daughter of John Waite
BEYOND THE FIVE STAGES

Posted on August 20th, 2026

For decades, many people have been introduced to grief through the concept of the “Five Stages of Grief”—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages have become so deeply embedded in our culture that many grieving people believe they are supposed to experience loss in this order and eventually arrive at a final destination called acceptance. The problem is that grief rarely works that way.

For many bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who have experienced profound loss, the five stages can feel frustrating, misleading, and even harmful. Instead of helping them understand their grief, the model can create unrealistic expectations about what grief should look like and how long it should last.

The truth is that grief is not a series of boxes to check off. It is not a process that follows a predictable path. And it certainly is not something that can be completed..

The five stages were introduced by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. Importantly, her work focused on people facing their own terminal illness, not on bereaved individuals grieving the death of a loved one. Over time, the model was applied broadly to all forms of loss and grief. Unfortunately, many people began interpreting the stages as a roadmap that everyone should follow.

This misunderstanding has led countless grieving individuals to wonder:

- “Why am I still angry years later?”
- “Did I skip a stage?”
- “What’s wrong with me if I haven’t reached acceptance?”
- “Why does my grief feel worse again after I thought I was doing better?”

The answer is simple: grief is not a linear process.

Anyone who has lived with significant loss knows that grief can be unpredictable. One day you may feel relatively stable. The next day, a song, a photograph, a birthday, or an ordinary moment can bring overwhelming sadness. Years after a loss, tears may still come unexpectedly. Moments of joy may coexist with moments of heartbreak. This doesn’t mean something is wrong. It means you are human.

Families share with me that grief often moves in waves not stages. Those waves may become less intense over time, but they can still return without warning. Anniversaries, milestones, holidays, and life transitions frequently reopen emotions that never completely disappear. A parent whose child died twenty years ago may still cry when speaking their child’s name. A sibling may still feel the ache of an empty chair at family gatherings. A grandparent may still

wonder what milestones their grandchild would have reached. These experiences are not signs of unfinished grief. They are signs of enduring love.

One of the most damaging misconceptions about the stage model is the idea that grief has a finish line. Many grieving people feel pressure from society to “move on,” “find closure,” or “get over it.” The five stages can unintentionally reinforce the belief that there is a point at which grief should be resolved and left behind. But grief is not a problem to solve. Grief exists because love exists.

When someone important dies, the relationship changes, but it does not disappear. We continue to carry memories, hopes, dreams, and connections with those we love. Their absence becomes part of our life story. For bereaved parents especially, there is no stage that removes the reality that their child is missing. There is no level of acceptance that erases the longing to hold them again. Instead of ending, grief often evolves. We learn to carry it differently. We find ways to integrate the loss into our lives. We create meaning, memories, rituals, and connections that allow us to move forward while continuing to honor the person who died.

Another challenge with the stage model is that it suggests grief should look similar for everyone. In reality, grief is deeply personal. Some people cry often. Others rarely cry at all. Some want to talk about their loved one constantly. Others need long periods of quiet. Some find comfort in support groups. Others find healing through writing, faith, art, nature, service, or private remembrance. There is no universal timeline. There is no standard progression. There is no checklist for successful grieving. What matters is not whether someone’s grief matches a theory. What matters is whether they are finding healthy ways to navigate their loss while honoring their unique experience.

Rather than viewing grief as a series of stages to complete, it may be more helpful to think of grief as a lifelong journey of adaptation. Over time, many bereaved individuals discover that they can experience both grief and joy. They can laugh again without loving less. They can build meaningful lives while continuing to miss the person who died. The goal is not to stop grieving. The goal is to learn how to carry grief alongside life. Some days grief takes center stage. Other days it quietly accompanies us in the background. Both experiences are normal. What many bereaved people eventually discover is that healing does not mean forgetting. It does not mean closure. It does not mean reaching a final stage where grief disappears. Healing means learning to live with a love that no longer has a physical place to go.

Perhaps the greatest gift we can give ourselves is permission to grieve in our own way. We do not need to fit our experiences into five categories. We do not need to measure our progress against an imaginary timeline. We do not need to feel guilty when grief resurfaces years later. Grief is not a disorder to cure or a task to complete. It is a natural response to loving someone deeply and losing them physically. I recently spoke to a bereaved mom who felt that she was not progressing as others do. Three years after the death of her son, she still found herself crying daily, and often has days filled with anger and rage. Sharing with her that she is moving along as she needed to, for herself, was eye opening for her

The reality is that grief changes, grows, and transforms throughout our lives. It may soften. It may become quieter. But for many people, especially after the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild, it never completely disappears. And that’s okay. Because grief is not evidence that we are failing to heal. It is evidence that someone we love mattered. And that love continues.

BRENDA BUSBY

	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.

If you would like to sponsor our chapter website, please contact our Website Manager via email:

tcfnoshoreweb@gmail.com

Website sponsor signup sheets are also available at our monthly in-person meetings.



Love Notes



*Some people shine
too brightly to
ever be forgotten.*

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 – July 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