



**The Compassionate Friends**  
MA/CT Border Towns Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Box 481, Charlton, MA 01507

## NEWSLETTER

### YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends are here for you. Our mission 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.

Our chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua Church  
22 Dudley Hill Road, Dudley, MA

**Chapter Leader:** Anne Mathieu  
508-248-7144 [ampm1259@charter.net](mailto:ampm1259@charter.net)  
**Treasurer:** Anne Mathieu  
**Newsletter Editor:** Anne Mathieu  
**Webmaster:** Sylvia Gaumont  
**Chapter e mail:** [BorderTownsTCF@yahoo.com](mailto:BorderTownsTCF@yahoo.com)  
**Chapter Website:**  
<https://tcfborder.wixsite.com/tcf-ma-ct-border>

**Regional Coordinator:** Dennis Gravelle  
978-537-2736 [dgtcf@aol.com](mailto:dgtcf@aol.com)

**National Office:** TCF  
Toll Free Tel: 877-969-0010  
National Web Page:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## Our Next Sharing Sessions

**Thurs. January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Thurs. February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Thurs. March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

*If it's been awhile since you've been to a meeting, you are always welcome to join us.*

*If you are newly bereaved, feel free to bring a supportive friend or relative.*

*Share your feelings, or say nothing and just listen; but please come.*

***"You need not walk alone"***



## TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Sometimes it helps to talk with someone who understands your pain. If you're having a bad day, please call one of us.

**"You Need Not Walk Alone!"**

**Anne Mathieu** 978-618-5671  
Email: [ampm1259@charter.net](mailto:ampm1259@charter.net)

**Sylvia Gaumont** 508-764-6170  
Email: [jurwithme@charter.net](mailto:jurwithme@charter.net)

## Another Year

Old year has gone away  
with gift and candle –  
old year has gone away  
with thought and song.

Old year has given light  
and dark and season.  
Old year has been too short  
and been too long.

Old year has given joy  
and disappointment  
Old year has given grief  
and strength to cope.  
Old year was memory  
and was forgetting –  
    Another year is come:  
    give it your hope.

Sascha

Time slips by and life  
goes on, but from our  
hearts you're never  
gone. We think about  
you always, we talk  
about you too, we  
have so many  
memories, but we  
wish we still had you.



## WINTERSUN

There are those days in winter  
when your world is frozen  
into a vision of eternal ice,  
when earth and air  
are strangers to each other,  
when sound and color seem forever  
gone.

    There are those days in winter  
    when you feel like dying,  
    when life itself surrenders you to  
    anguish,  
    to total mourning and to endless  
    grief.

And then it happens: from the bitter sky,  
a timid sun strides to his silent battle  
against the gray and hostile universe –  
it changes ice to roses, sky to song.

    And then it happens that your heart  
    recalls some distant joy, a gladness  
    from the past. A slender light at first,  
    then larger, braver, until your mind  
    returns to hope and peace.

Let memories be beauty in your life,  
like song and roses in the wintersun.

Sascha

### ***PLEASE NOTE***

**During winter months, meeting cancellations may be necessary due to inclement weather or poor road conditions.**

**E mail notices of cancellation will be sent out by 5 p.m. the day of the meeting.**

**If in doubt, please feel free to call me at 978-618-5671.**

## LOVE GIFTS

What is a "love gift"? A love gift is a very thoughtful way of remembering your child (at special times such as birthday, anniversary, or at any time), with a donation to your local chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

With your donations, we are able to reach out to other bereaved families, purchase pamphlets, cover printing and postage costs. Tax deductible donations may be brought in to a meeting or sent to:

***The Compassionate Friends  
P.O. Box 431, Charlton, Ma. 01507***



***Thank you for love gifts received from:***

**Martha Clarke** in loving memory of her son Zachary Jeneral

**Catherine Seaver** in loving memory of her son David, grandson Sean, and the founder of the Dudley Chapter of the Compassionate Friends  
William Seaver Sr.

**Lorraine Belleville** in loving memory of her grandson Samuel Tharp

**Ellie Buxton** in loving memory of her son Drew

Candles and supplies for our candle lighting were provided by **Paul & Anne Mathieu** in memory of their son Sean.

Thank you to all who provided refreshments for our candle lighting. They made the evening special.

## New Members

**We know how difficult the first meetings can be.**

**We hope you found comfort and understanding in the company of other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who truly understand your grief.**

**Please come again and allow us to help you on this painful journey.**

*We Need Not Walk Alone*

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### A Picture of You

A picture of you I carry in my heart  
I close my eyes to see it  
When the world gets dark  
A memory of you I carry in my soul  
I wrap it close around me  
When the nights get cold  
If you ask how I am, I'd say just fine  
But the truth is  
If you could read my mind  
Not a day goes by  
That I don't think of you

Author unknown

*While The Compassionate Friends charge no dues or fees, the reality is that it costs money to run the chapter. Please consider making a tax deductible donation in memory of your child. Postage stamps or small packets of tissues are always needed and appreciated donations also.*

## ***Birthday Remembrances***

***We celebrate the day they  
were born and hold them in  
our hearts forever.***



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Alexis Auger – Matthew Bates – Joseph Dupuis – Katherine Kaiser – Brooklyn Skye Kilburn – Anthony Monopoli - David Pirkarczyk – Sean Seaver

### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jayce Garcia - Brenna Larson - Andrew Lauder - Nicholas Ledoux - Zachary Sheridan - Michael Sullivan

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Michelle Boutilier - Timothy Chrzan - Michael Desrosiers - Russell Harrington - Bethanie Leann Malone - John Palker - David Seibel - Mary Williams

My apologies to Ellie Buxton for misspelling her son Drew Michael Buxton's name under December Anniversaries

## ***In Memory of our Children***

***As long as we live,  
our children too shall live,  
for they are part of us  
in our memories.***



### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Cathy Allen - Alexis & Ava Auger - Matthew Bates - Emily Bluin – Michelle Boutilier - Timothy Chrzan - Peter Diani Jr. - Ryan French - Gary Gemme – Jason Gaumond - John Judzynski – David Seibel - Ryan Townsend

### FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Alejandro Lorente - Edward Masterson - Joseph Meszaro - Scott Ruth - Kelly Sanders - David Seaver - Oliver Tombeno – Robin Tyler

### MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Mike Bond - Michael Desrosiers - Patrick Fischetti - Mandy Hewitt - Michael Hokanson-Dion - Daniel Keyser - Brooklyn Skye Kilborn – John Palker - Zachary Sheridan - DesMichael Spinks/Farrer - Alexandria Steinbuch - Michael Sullivan - Mary Williams

## TCF's Policy on Religion

TCF reaches out across society's barriers to all parents, siblings, and grandparents. We respect everyone's beliefs and espouse no specific religious or philosophical ideology. We welcome parents, siblings and grandparents of all ages, grieving the death of a child, sibling or grandchild at any age and from any cause. We treat each other with care and respect showing consideration for those with whom we may disagree. We appreciate your sharing your faith if you want to, but we do not debate dogma of any faith and do not try to change in any way another's faith. **We are The Compassionate Friends.**

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Just when  
the *caterpillar*  
thought the world was  
over... it became a  
*butterfly*



## I'll Wait For You...

By Stephen O'Brien

I will wait for you...  
Though we never had a chance to say goodbye,  
Remember me...  
When winter snows are falling through a quiet  
sky  
I'll remember you  
When, in our darkest hour,  
You held my hand and prayed I wouldn't go,  
But a silent voice called out to me;  
My time had come, and I had to travel Home...  
Since then, I know your life has never been the  
same,  
For I visit you each day:  
So many times I've felt your pain:  
I've watched you cry:  
And I've heard you call my name...  
But now, further along life's road  
I stand in a timeless world, just beyond your  
sight,  
Waiting for the day when I can take your hand  
and bring you across  
to this land of Golden Light...  
Till then, remember me, you understand — and  
try not to cry.  
But if you do:  
Let your tears fall  
For the happiness and joy we knew,  
And for the special love we shared,  
For love can never die.

# 2022

## What Kind Of "New" Year Will It Be?

Well, since you are reading this, you must have survived those dreaded holidays. Some of you may be holding onto your sanity by the skin of your teeth, but you're here. For now, that's enough.

If this is your first or second new year without your child, consider that an emotional victory. I'm sure you wondered several times how you could possibly survive all that family warmth and frivolity without your child. Well, you did.

Now it is a brand new year. It's up to you what you make of it. Do you want to spend the year bitter, angry, withdrawn, and tormented? Or do you want to begin to enjoy life again and start healing? Believe it or not, it IS up to you.

I'm going to assume that you want to begin healing. There are a few things that you must know. It absolutely is NOT disloyal to your child's memory to smile again or enjoy yourself. Would your child wish everlasting pain on you? Would he/she want you to cry every day for the rest of your life?

One of the key elements to softening the pain is to try to think about all the good things that you have instead of what you've lost. I know that seems impossible, but force yourself to try. If you've got family, friends, health, whatever, count your blessings.

Another important element to healing is to be grateful that you had your child at all. I know that seems ludicrous when you feel you've been robbed because you "should" have been able to watch your child grow old. The fact is that you aren't going to do that. Whatever memories you have of your child, or whatever joy you get from having loved him/her, no matter how briefly you had them, is worth hanging on to.

You also need to trust. Look around your next TCF meeting. Do you see the veterans laughing and sharing joyful stories with each other? Do you hear about new babies, weddings, hope, and love? Trust that these parents love their children as much as you love yours. Trust that life can go on again.

Even though it sounds impossible, trust us when we say you will find happiness again. No one will try to tell you that you will eventually heal to the point where it doesn't hurt at all. No one will tell you that you'll be your old self soon. We realize you have been changed forever by the death of your child. For now, you'll just have to take our word that it does get better and the pain does dull itself a little with time.

It's a brand new year, why not try to make it one of healing and health, occasional smiles, reaching out to others, and remembering the good times? Maybe you can even start looking forward to the future.

As radical as all these concepts may seem to you now, guess what? When you do finally feel that you've made some progress, these will be what you did to get there.

Take it easy on yourself. We're with you.

--Kathy Hahn Lower Bucks, PA

THOSE WE HAVE  
HELD  
IN OUR ARMS  
FOR A  
LITTLE WHILE....

WE WILL HOLD IN  
OUR HEARTS  
FOREVER

### **The Gifts You've Given Me**

I left the need to know Why  
behind years ago.

You were a child, my child.  
Now you parent.  
Invisibly, quietly, from behind the  
veil,  
You show me the meaning of Life.  
You have given me the gift of  
Awareness.

I am not the same.  
In losing you, I found my strength,  
my sorrow,  
my compassion, my Self.  
You have given me the gift of  
Suffering.

These tears carry knowledge  
that through suffering came  
understanding,

Instead, I practice finding peace  
with the inner turmoil,  
accepting the unacceptable, living  
my truth.

You have given me the gift of  
uncertainly  
and thus, taught me to live in the  
Now.

The fingers of your loss have  
quietly shaped me,  
molding away the sharp edges,  
my judgment of others, my  
innocence.

You have given me the gift of  
Humility.

And through understanding came  
forgiveness,  
And through forgiveness came  
Love.

You fluttered in my womb like a  
butterfly,  
and now you flutter in my soul,  
eternally a part of me.  
Eternally giving.

Sara Therese  
TCF Tucson, AZ  
In memory of Shawn



## Healing and Hope

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, which control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand!" This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face.

Fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way who have learned that, out of this morass of loneliness, anger, guilt and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope. Though small and fleeting at first, this hope becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. And this healing will occur even though there is still no understanding of "Why?"

It is by working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger including anger at God and even at the dead child, crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help if necessary), that the loneliness will lessen, and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought gone forever. Each one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery—in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear never to return—return not occur, although the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing," a process whereby our lives come to a new "normal." Healing implies (a) our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and (b) our slowly learning to resume productive relationships with others. This is done all while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work, but we cannot stop it!!

One of the greatest hindrances to our healing is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time! Perhaps the greatest obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive—ourselves, the dead child, others involved with the child's death, even God if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if that's all we had), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living.

No matter where you are in your journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead

Robert Gloor

Tuscaloosa, AL

TCF





**The Compassionate Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

## **THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO**

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this

gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

