



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

P. O. Box 187, Pascoag, R.I. 02859

NEWSLETTER

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 7:00 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 22 Dudley Hill Road, Dudley, MA

Chapter Leader/ Facilitator: Becky Adams
Putnam, CT. 959-444-0792
E mail: BeckyAdamsAuthor@gmail.com

Treasurer: Melissa Lagesse
Pascoag, RI 401-651-0630

Newsletter Editor: Anne Mathieu
Charlton, MA 508-248-7144
E mail: ampm1259@charter.net

Webmaster: Sylvia Gaumond 508-764-6170

Chapter e mail: BordertownsTCF@yahoo.com

Chapter Website:
<https://tcfborder.wixsite.com/tcf-ma-ct-border>

Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle
Leominster, MA 978-660-7906
E mail: dennisgravelle78@gmail.com

TCF National Office Toll Free Tel: 877-969-0010
National WebPage: www.compassionatefriends.org

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Our Next Sharing Sessions

Thurs. October 9th, 2025

Thurs. November 13th, 2025

**Thurs. December 11th, 2025

****Annual candle lighting in memory of our children gone too soon. Candles will be provided. Please bring a photograph of your child and join us for this evening of music and readings. Also, if you're able, please bring a snack or drink to share with the group. Let's make this a special evening.**

You are always welcome to join us, even if it's been awhile since you've been to a meeting.

If this is your first meeting, 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

Having a bad day? Sometimes it helps to talk with someone who understands your pain. Please don't hesitate to call one of us.

Becky Adams 959-444-0792
Email: BeckyAdamsAuthor@gmail.com

Melissa Lagesse 401-651-0630
Email: MLGLTLJL@gmail.com

Anne Mathieu 978-618-5671
Email: ampm1259@charter.net

Sylvia Gaumond 508-764-6170
Email: jurwithme@charter.net

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 for our newsletters and other materials.

Your tax deductible donations may be brought in to a meeting or sent to:

The Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 187, Pascoag, R.I. 02859



Thank you for love gifts received from:

Martha Clarke in loving memory of her son
Zachary Jeneral

Thank you also to those who leave
donations anonymously in our basket at
meetings.

***At this giving time of year,
please consider a donation to The
Compassionate Friends in memory
of your child. All donations are very
much appreciated. No amount is too
small.***

FALL

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south “talking” with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so “down” and preoccupied with our child’s death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us. Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

Peggy Hartzell
TCF Ambler, PA

Every year on my son's Angelversary, I post a tribute & a message about my unimaginable journey & what I have learned...It's hard to believe another year has once again helped me to move through the challenges, honor the messages & appreciate the lessons that have come to me. I hope the words I share might help to convey my ever-grateful heart!

Eight Years

It's been eight years since my unimaginable journey began ... what does that mean exactly? It means that I have survived a parent's worst nightmare. I have outlived my child. I have continued to breathe in & out for 2,921 days, wishing at some point during every one of those days, that life had provided a different outcome. I have existed 70,127 hours aware that there will always be a void – an empty chair – a deep despair that cannot be assuaged. I have endured 4,207,594 minutes knowing that what might have been will never be. I have survived 252,455,616 seconds without a piece of my heart and somehow it's still beating. Where is my child? I've asked that question from the moment of Grant's death. In my opinion, that question can only be answered from within. I will tell you that, for me, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that my son is never very far. I have had so many precious experiences letting me know that he is still very much a part of what I do. His sense of humor remains intact ... his intelligence grows... his love and concern for the people he cares for is unwavering.

How have I survived his death? Is there some magic potion? Is there some secret? First, I survived because I chose to. I made the conscious choice to continue on. Believe me, I contemplated other options on the darkest nights. Any parent who has endured this will

probably tell you the same thing. It is shattering to move through the acute grief that consumes you when your child dies. You feel literally ripped to shreds by the sharp, protruding pieces of who you once were. In the beginning you wonder if your heart can physically endure the pain. It's the most difficult thing I've ever done – choosing to live on. Second, nope/negative/nada there is NO magic potion that will help. If only it were that easy. Third, is there a secret? Actually, there is, however you have to find it for yourself. Each one of us must search for the answer(s). We are as individual as our children & what works for one may not work for another. For me, it's been a combination of things. If you reach within yourself & also ask your child for help a miraculous thing occurs – the secret finds you. It's work and it's exhausting , yet it is so worth it. The discovery brings you so close to where they are now& gives you comfort that is beyond description. Why have I chosen to move forward? This one is simple for me – Because in my heart & soul I know he wants me to. Does that mean it's easy? Absolutely not. It's challenging, overwhelming, exhausting, frustrating and difficult. It's a conscious choice, yet it's also wondrous. I believe that by embracing his life & legacy I keep his memory alive in a positive and loving way. The focus then becomes how he lived, not how he died. Knowing he wants me to live out my life doesn't take away the sorrow of missing him. I miss him every single moment of every single day. He is one of my first thoughts when I wake up each day & he is one of my final thoughts as I go to sleep each night.

When will the grief end? I know now that it never will & I'm okay with that. I have made

(continued on page 4)

-3-

(Continued from page 3)

peace with it, for the most part & I know that grief is just another facet of the amazing gift within us all – LOVE. It is not a burden to carry my grief. The heaviness that used to weigh me down is gone. That doesn't mean it isn't arduous on some days. When I'm triggered by an event or a memory or just missing him a bit more than usual, the magnitude of his absence is intensified. For me, it's been learning how to navigate the challenges. I have found comfort in others' survival stories (flashlights – if you will – to lead me through the shadows). I have found a space for my grief & most days I carry it with gratitude. Strange as that may seem, carrying my grief with gratitude has been a gift of grace. A deep & abiding love surrounds my mournfulness now. In my discovery I have come to accept that I would rather have experienced carrying this sweet little creature under my heart for 9 months, been blessed to share in his all too brief and amazing life, bravely endured his death & become the keeper of his legacy – than never have known him. It is a painful awakening and it takes time to find an understanding. It gradually occurs through countless tears, sleepless nights, seeking answers & finding peace.

Who am I now? A different soul than I was before. I continue on my quest for understanding & I do my best to honor Grant by living for us both. By keeping the tremendous gifts he left behind alive & well in the hearts of those he loves. Yet, it is also enduring the permanence of his absence. Suffering an anguish that cannot be articulated. Bearing the sorrow of a life that ended far too soon. Carrying my grief with a dignity & grace that makes him proud. It is

leaving the bitterness that rears its ugly head from time to time, exactly where I find it. Most of all, it's becoming someone who laughs, appreciates, forgives, learns, strives believes & loves with my whole heart!

I don't know how long it will be before I am where he is now. Seconds, minutes, hours, days, months or years. I don't focus on that too much anymore. I live each day & do my best to be better than the day before. What I do know is this – on that wonderful day – ALL the hosts in the Heavens will know that I am Home by the joyous shouts that will escape this no longer grieving mother's heart. Until then my beautiful boy!

Kris Leitner
Grant's Mom

*This season I am thankful for the
Hands*

That hold mine

Hearts

That hurt with me

Ears

That always listen

Arms

Always ready to hug

Friends

Who always remember

www.grieftoolbox.com

Healing Is A Process

Because everyone grieves in different ways they also heal in different ways. None of us can define the grieving process for another person. We cannot prescribe a time for grief. We cannot say how long it should take to mourn. We can't set standards for how another person expresses grief. We can't say that someone isn't grieving "properly". But we can come alongside those who grieve and say "I can't imagine the depth of your pain, but I want to help and hope that I can be what you need me to be as you go through it".

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

- Henri Nouwen

(Lovingly lifted from
TCF North Shore Chapter
Newsletter, July 2017)

NOTE: With winter approaching, it may be necessary to cancel a meeting due to bad weather or road conditions. Cancellation notices will be sent via e-mail by 5 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Blessings and Burdens

As our feelings of loss and pain mingle with celebration, our memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles. When memories of winter's past come to mind, many of us can find a light behind the tears. Images and sounds that are stored inside emerge in our mind with familiar clarity and evergreen tenderness.

But there are those among us who have no holiday memories because their infants did not live long enough to see their first season of lights. These grievers have few memories to give them solace today, and we can only tell them that we are deeply aware of this special part of their grief.

Sascha Wagner

Wintersun

When you're lonely,
I wish you LOVE

When you're down,
I wish you JOY

When things get complicated,
I wish you FAITH

When things look empty,
I wish you HOPE

WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on December 14th, 2025 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL), a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes, as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten.

Every year you are invited to post a message on our Memorial Wall which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website. The Memorial Wall will be open to post a message Sunday, December 1st, through Friday, December 13th. Photos can be posted on our **TCF** Facebook page.



One Little Candle

By Sheila Simmons, TCF Atlanta, GA

I lit a candle tonight, in honor of you.

Remembering your life, and all the times
we'd been through.

Such a small little light the candle made
until I realized how much in darkness it lit
the way.

All the tears I've cried in all my grief and
pain.

What a garden they grew, watered with
human rain.

I sometimes can't see beyond the moment,
in hopeless despair.

But when your memory sustains me, in
heartaches repair.

I can wait for the tomorrow, when my
sorrows ease.

Until then, I'll light this candle and let my
memories run free.

Birthday Remembrances

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



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Drew Michael Buxton - Patrick Fischetti -
Zachary Jeneral - Brenden Lange

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Joseph Doucette - James Garcia

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Matt Alsfeld - Tara Hogan -

NOTE:

If you notice any errors or if I've
missed your child's birthday or
anniversary, please let me know.
I make every effort to keep our
information up-to-date but I am not a
professional and occasionally I do
make mistakes. ~ Anne

In Memory of our Children

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



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

Sarah Arnold - Ryan Marsan - Sean Mathieu

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

None

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Drew Michael Buxton - Anne Dugas -
Amanda Keith

Thoughts for the Bereaved during the Holidays

Plan Ahead. Bereaved individuals who experience the most difficulty with the holiday season are those who have given little thought to the challenges they will encounter. Consider ahead of time what may be expected of you, both socially and emotionally, as well as your own preferences.

Accept Your Limitations. Grief consumes most of our available energy no matter what the season. The holidays place additional demands on your time and emotions. Plan to lower your expectations to accommodate current needs.

Make Changes. Your circumstances have changed. Expect to make necessary alterations in holiday plans to accommodate those changes. Consider changing your surroundings, rituals, and/or traditions to diminish the stress. Serve notice on family and friends that this year things may be somewhat different.

Trim Down to Essentials. Limit social and family commitments to suit your available energy. Shop early or use catalog sales. Reevaluate priorities and forgo unnecessary activities and obligations.

Ask for and Accept Help. Accept offers for assistance with holiday shopping, decorating, cleaning, cooking, etc. Chances are loved ones are looking for ways to lessen your burden at this time of year.

Allow those who care about you to offer their support in concrete ways.

Inform Others of Your Needs. Give family and friends the tools they need to help you through the holidays. Be specific about your preferences and desires, and keep them up to date when those needs change.

Build In flexibility. Learn to “play it by ear”. There is no concrete formula for learning to deal with loss. You are the foremost authority on what is best for you, and your needs may legitimately change from day to day. Accept the fluctuations that must occur when walking in unknown territory, and learn to take each moment as it comes.

Give Yourself Permission “to Be.” Allow breathing space and expect fluctuations in mood and perspective. The bereaved work overtime. Not only is life more complicated, but all energy is siphoned into mental and emotional resolution. Grieving is nature’s way of healing the mind and heart from the greatest injury of all. Allow yourself the privilege of limping till your wounds have healed and you can learn to run again.

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From Bereavement Magazine

A Christmas Wish

**I'll miss you at Christmas
when laughter's everywhere,
when church bells chime
In merry rhyme
And warmth is in the air.**

**I'll think of you at Christmas
Of when you were with me,
Of simple joys and silly toys
And days that used to be.**

**I'll miss you at Christmas
When children's faces glow,
And gaze in childish
wonderment
At Santa and presents in a
row.**

**I wish a Christmas miracle
Could bring you back this way,
And we could be together
For one more Christmas day.**

Lily de Lauder



Wishing you a wonderful
holiday season filled with
happy memories, peace, love
and laughter.

Your Compassionate Friends

Ma/Ct Border Towns
Chapter