



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

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www.compassionatefriends.org

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Our Next Sharing Sessions

Thurs., October 13th.

Thurs., November 10th

*** Thurs., December 8th***

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"

***Annual candle lighting in memory of our children gone too soon.**



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

Sylvia Gaumont 508-764-6170
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PLEASE NOTE

With winter approaching, meeting cancellations may be necessary due to inclement weather or poor road conditions.

E mail notices of cancellations will be sent out by 5 p.m.

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



*Wishing you a
wonderful
Thanksgiving;
A day filled with
family and
friends,
peace, love and
laughter.*

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 431, Charlton, Ma. 01507***



Thank you for love gifts received from:

Martha Clarke in loving memory of her
son Zachary Jeneral

Wendell & Karen Keith in loving
memory of their daughter Amanda



**In loving memory of Sean Mathieu
August 1974 - October 1996**

THANKSGIVING

The time draws near, and the calendar says that Thanksgiving is really here. Time to reflect, and time to gather thoughts of what to be thankful for. Thankful? I think not. My life is not full these days and to be thankful is beyond my grasp. But to give thanks? This I believe I can do. Searching my soul deep within, reasons to give thanks surface to the edge. Yes, I give thanks – for the memories of yesterdays. The love, the laughter, the joy of each day when my child was with us.. The trials and tribulations of being an active parent. The rewards and challenges of raising a child. The days of blissful ignorance when I thought tragedy would never visit our home. The days when life was normal, even though I took it all for granted. I give thanks for the treasures today. The sunrise, the sunset, the changing of the seasons. The new found friends along this journey I reluctantly travel. The tried and true friends who stand by me still. The strong and everlasting love of my spouse. The warmth of wet kisses from my canine companion and feline friend. The encouragement and support, compassion and caring I give and receive as I survive and help others to survive. For the hopes and possibilities of a peaceful tomorrow. With faith, love and perseverance as I struggle to move on with my child in my heart forevermore, spiritually guiding

me with his new presence.

With sorrow and reluctance, each new day to yet somehow, be open and loving, not to forsake what I've learned because of what I've lost.

You see, it's not about keeping up with the Jones', having an SUV or two in the garage or state of the art technology – it's about love. It's about the gifts of yesterday, blended with the blessings of today to make meaning for tomorrow.

Meg Avery (James' Mom)
TCF, Lawrenceville, GA



**A New Year brings
time to reflect
On the children we love,
Those who remain with us,
And those for whom we grieve.**

Wayne Loder

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

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Matt Alsfield - 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 make mistakes.

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

Sean Mathieu

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Drew Michael Buxton - Anne Dugas -

The Compassionate Friends is a nondenominational organization. We are not affiliated with St. Anthony of Padua Church. We are very grateful that they allow us the use of their church for our meetings.

Notice:

Please join us for our Annual Candle lighting in memory of our children, to be held as part of our meeting on Thurs., Dec. 8th.

As has been our tradition, we ask that you bring a picture of your child and that those who can bring a snack to share with the group. (Perhaps one of your child's favorites?)

Holiday Feelings

It is fitting that in this time of heightened emotional awareness, the memories about dead children assume a bittersweet priority. As our feelings of loss and pain mingle with the celebrations, memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this festive season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles. Holiday feelings are intricate.

Let it be.

~Sacha

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 Sunday, December 11th, 2022 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of persons 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, 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, but has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance.

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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, but will never be forgotten.

Every year you are invited to post a message in the Remembrance Book which will be available, during the event, at TCF's national website. Photos can be posted on our Worldwide Candle Lighting Facebook page.

*For those of you facing
your first holidays without
your child,
please know that it will get
better.
You will feel joy again.
There is hope.
The love will always remain
and your child will always
be with you.
Of course, it is not
like we hoped it would be,
but it can be good.
Our children will always
be a "present" part of our lives..
they will not be forgotten.
I pray you find peace
this holiday season.
I pray your sorrow will soften
and your memories bring
smiles.
I pray you will be able to enjoy
your family and friends.
I pray you know that
You are not alone.*

**A New Year brings
time to reflect
On the children we love,
Those who remain with us,
And those for whom we grieve.**

Wayne Loder

At Thanksgiving

Though you're filled with sorrow and pain over the loss of your child, you can be thankful for:

- The memories you hold close.
- The time you shared with your child, no matter how short it was.
- The things your child taught you.
- The friends that are there when you need them.

And you can also be thankful for:

- The strength that makes you a survivor.
- The smiles of other children, they are not our missing children, but they still smile.

TCF, Portland,

OR

How to Cope with the Holidays

We are all at different places in our grief, especially when it comes to the holidays. Some of us are very newly bereaved and we can't even think of a holiday celebration this year. For others of us this will be our second or third or later holiday season and we know that it is possible to, at least, survive the holidays.

If it is your first year I suggest you do only what you feel must be done for yourself, your spouse, and your surviving children. Inform other around you (your own parents and siblings, and in-laws) that Christmas this year will be too painful; that you don't have the interest or the energy to celebrate as you have in the past.

Whether they accept this as reasonable or even okay is their problem. Ask for their understanding, but if you don't get it, don't worry about it. Remember, the first months what we do or not do is a matter of survival. We cannot content ourselves with another's understanding or approval. Leave traditions for other years. Why should you expect yourself to carry them out when they are not only painful, but have little meaning now that your child is no longer a part of them.

Recognize that this year will be painful and surrender to that fact. Don't use up energy you don't have to pretend it is the same. Admit and accept that you don't even WANT the holiday to happen this year. Of course, few of us can completely ignore the holidays but we can do a lot to relieve ourselves of the unnecessary pressure. In the holiday suggestions in this newsletter, you will find ideas that will help you cope. Most important of all is the idea that you should do what makes it easier for you.

I might suggest that you turn yourself to the real meaning of Christmas this year – the birth of a child meant to die. Maybe the spiritual aspect of the holiday might give the comfort that

material celebrations cannot. Of course, the thought that your child will be at the Christ child's birthday party this year will cause tears.

After many years that thought still brings tears to my eyes, but that's okay. God knows you are crying because you loved and that's what He is all about.

For those of us who are at the second, third or later holidays, this year may be even harder. One reason is that after a year or more is past we will not have the support we need, and yes, even the permission of those around us, to hurt at the holidays.

Others only give us a year to grieve and surely if you have gone through the first holidays without your child, they feel you should not have trouble after that.

The second holiday season may be the most difficult because we were numb and hurt so badly at the first holidays that we barely realized that the holidays were there. Maybe in the second year the shock of the death is less and the reality that our child IS dead, and will NEVER be a part of our holiday again, is even more vivid. This is a deeper and more lasting pain than we experienced in the first year. We may experience this pain for many years.

Again, I encourage you to do what is best for yourself, your spouse and your surviving children, and allow those around you to think what they will. They have not experienced what we have and do not have the right to inflict their expectations on us, nor do we have the obligation to conform to their expectations.

A word about approval might be appropriate here. We are a society that lives by approval. Others must approve of our actions, our behavior, and sometimes, even our thoughts.

If we don't meet the approval of society, we are cast out.

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Even we turn that lack of approval inside and say to ourselves: “If I don’t conform I must be different or wrong.”

If we are concerned with meeting another’s approval we surrender our individuality – our real selves.

If we are to grow from the experience of losing our child; if we are to successfully resolve our grief; we must stop looking to others for approval of what we do.

We must have confidence that how WE handle our grief is good and right. Since WE are experiencing OUR grief, WE are suffering OUR pain. WE are working towards OUR recovery; we must do it OUR way.

Just as no one can live our lives, no one can live our grief and no one can tell us how to grieve.

See yourself as knowing what is best for you. Don’t let others take that right from you by succumbing to their disapproval.

Handle the holidays, whether it is your first or your twenty-first, the way that’s best for you. You will be the one who will grow from it.

Margaret H. Gerner, M.S.W.
TCF/St. Louis, MO

*Don't let the pain
and sadness of
losing your child
take away the joy
and happiness of loving them
for the years you shared.*

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.

