



The Compassionate Friends

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

P.O. 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, Dudley Hill Road, Dudley, MA 01570

Chapter Leader/Treasurer: Anne Mathieu
508-248-7144 ampm1259@charter.net

Newsletter Editor: Anne Mathieu

Webmaster: Sylvia Gaumond

E Mail: BordertownsTCF@yahoo.com

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

Regional Coordinator: Dennis Gravelle
978-537-2736 dgtcf@aol.com

National Office: TCF

Toll Free Tel: 877-969-0010

National Web Page:

www.compassionatefriends.org

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Our Next Sharing Sessions

Thurs. April 13th, 2023

Thurs. May 11th, 2023

Thurs. June 8th, 2023

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

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

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. 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

NOTE: When making a donation in memory of your child/grandchild or sibling, please feel free to include a personal message. I would be happy to include it in the newsletter.

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!

Mother's Day Without You

Even in the fleeting time that the two of us were three,

You taught us of the purest form of love that there can be --
of a mother for her baby,
for the new life that she bore,
for the miracle love created.

How could anyone ask for more?
Short-lived was my chance for motherhood.
Because you could not stay
And I would give almost anything
To see you smile today.

Sharon S. O'Keefe
TCF, Richmond, VA

Birthday Remembrances

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



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Jane Baron - Doreen Salvas -

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Amanda Keith - David Seaver - Samuel
Tharp -

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Leeanne Sharolow

In Memory of our Children

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



APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

Matt Alsfeld - Kelly Marie Ondrasek -
Michael Sprouse -

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

None

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Tara Hogan - Samuel Tharp

"They walk among you every day.
The silent griever.
It's easy to miss them for they've learned
how to mask their true pain.
You may think you are supporting them
when you ask 'How are you doing?'
But mostly they tell you what you want to
hear:
'I'm doing ok.'
'Hanging in there.'
'I'm taking it one day at a time.'
But if they had permission to be honest
they'd probably tell you the truth:
'Sometimes I feel like I can't breathe under
the weight of all this grief.'
'I don't understand how the world can just
keep moving on.'
'I feel completely alone.'
You nod your head in sympathy and say 'Let
me know if you need anything.'
And again they tell you what you want to
hear:
'Ok. Thanks.'
'That's so kind. Thank you.'
'I will.'
But if they had permission to be honest
they'd probably tell you the truth:
'I promise you I won't let you know if I need
anything.'
'It's all I can do to put one foot in front of
the other. I don't know what I need. I don't
have the energy to reach out. So, I won't.'
'There's no way I will. I don't want to seem
weak.'
Maybe you give them a hug and you
whisper 'I wish I could make it better for
you' before you walk away.'
And they smile and whisper back what you
want to hear:
'Thank you.'
'That means a lot.'
'I appreciate you.'
But if they had permission to be honest they'd
probably tell you the truth:
'No one can make it better but you could sit
with me in my messy grief for a while
longer.'

'I don't want someone to make it better. I
want someone to let me talk about how
much it really hurts.'
'Then please reach out more. Talk about my
loved one. Support me even when I can't
ask for it.'
And later that night you think about them as
you capture a quiet still moment in your
evening and your heart aches because you
know they are struggling.
You hope they know how much you truly
care about them.
You pick up your phone and think about
reaching out to them.
But then you doubt yourself.
You don't want to make them feel worse.
You don't want to remind them of their pain
if they are having a good night.
You don't really know what to say.
And so you put down your phone and trust
that they will reach out to you if they need
you.
But they probably won't.
Because we don't give them enough
permission to be real with their grief.
And so they continue to walk among us.
Grieving.
In silence."

Subscribe to the new Rock Your Kindness
podcast from Love What Matters:
<https://bit.ly/3Cvq0fR>

[#LoveWhatMatters](#)

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FATHER'S DAY

By Alan Pederson

Years have come and gone and time has surely drifted by. I've searched for any answer, yet I'm left to wonder why. The only thing I know for sure, through the happy and the sad. No matter what the circumstance, I will always be your dad. Not a day goes by that I don't hold you in my heart. My love reaches far beyond this space we are apart. These empty arms remember all the good times that we had. I may be standing here alone, but I will always be your dad. Some won't understand, so I don't bother to explain.

They look into my eyes, but they can only see the pain. Afraid to look too deep as they are blinded by the fear, if only they could know, a father's love won't disappear. So when this road gets lonely and the journey seems too hard, And I get to feeling sorry that I didn't get a card. If I close my eyes I can almost hear you say. "I love you and I miss you, daddy...Happy Fathers Day."

Alan Pederson is an award-winning speaker, songwriter and recording artist. His inspirational message of hope and his music have resonated deeply with those facing a loss or adversity in their lives and have made him one of the most popular and in-demand presenters in the world in finding hope after loss.

HOPE

"When does this pain of loss end? Is there no relief?" This is often the cry of a parent who has lost a child. The grief seems too big and too hard at times. And, there seems to be no end in sight for the pain and isolation. And, yet we know that somehow, some way, life must continue on.

We keep trying, keep reminding ourselves that we must take life one day at a time. In fact, sometimes we take life one hour at a time, giving ourselves the time we need to adjust to our new world, our new way, this life that now is labeled "the new normal". And, so we train our minds daily to look for the good to listen for the song and to watch for the sunshine and blue skies. We force ourselves to move forward into this world knowing that it will never be the same again, but also understanding that we must choose to move forward into this new land beyond our grief journey. And, so we do.

Hope is amazing as it teaches us that the very same sun is still shining and waiting to warm us. Nature is still painting the world with beauty beyond words. Our Father is still giving us comfort and help in order to help fill the void. And, so we slowly move forward knowing that one day the curtain of grief will be pulled back and we will be able to see life with new eyes and a heart filled with hope!

Clara Hinton

A Father Writes

A father does not find his job an easy one. The responsibilities he faces are enormous. Everything, from finance to being a good role model, tests a man's ability to be the best father he can be. It is a job charged with emotional, physical and mental challenge. And, at the time, it is only one of the many roles he fills. His roles include husband and lover, son, friend, boss, co-worker, to name a few. The relationships he has are numerous, complex and always changing. One event in particular can really put these relationships and roles to the test, the death of his child. The bereaved father is a unique individual, his uniqueness and attendant problems are not often understood by others, or even by himself. His child's death puts extraordinary demands on him. All the roles he fills change, and his life is truly not ever the same again. That is not to say it cannot be good, but just that the circumstances are going to be different. When a child dies, it seems that the majority of sympathy is directed toward the mother. This is usually because she is much more open in her grieving, thus it is easy to focus on her emotional needs. But what of the grieving father? His other roles may actually prevent him from working out his grief. As husband and provider, he is the one who sees to the practical things around the death, funeral arrangements, notification of people, arrangement for sibling care, etc. It may be days, weeks, or months before things are settled to the point that he thinks deeply about what happened. In most cases, he is back to work and into his usual routine

so quickly that he can find himself comforted by this. The impact of the child's death is lessened to a degree. Away from the house, it is easier to "forget" what has happened. In our society we are taught in subtle and not so subtle ways, that men don't cry and that, in general, they are not at all open about their emotions. Thus, many men are denied a perfectly good emotional release mechanism, crying. Even in the privacy of his own home, a man may feel that he has to "be the strong one." Our experience has taught us that men who use crying as a tool in their grief work have fewer long-term adjustment problems. Since men often suppress their feelings, good and bad, how they are coping with their child's death never comes to the surface.

Bob Steiner
TCF , Salem, OR

Child loss
Is not an event,
It is an indescribable
Journey of
SURVIVAL

SAVE THE DATE...



We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 46th Annual National Conference in Denver! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Denver, Colorado, during the weekend of July 7-9, 2023.

For more information, please go to the national website www.compassionatefriends.org



A day of joy and celebration
for all mothers on this earth
who love their children unconditionally
from adoption or from birth.

This love lasts a lifetime
but if you child should die
the day is marked with sadness
stained with tears that you will cry.

God bless you special mothers
whose children have donned wings
our thoughts are with you this bittersweet day
and the melancholy that it brings.

No matter how many years will pass
your heart will hurt this day
like a glowing ember flaring up
the pain returns your way.

There is nothing that can be said
nothing anyone can do
no one can heal the pain
so deep inside of you.

It is your pain
the greatest burden a mother can bear
imbedded within all the joys of Motherhood
there will always be some despair.

Find solace the best you can
in knowing a mother's love transcends all time and space
and no matter where your child is
they will feel your heart's embrace.

God could not be everywhere, so therefore he made Mothers.

“Don’t try to destroy a beautiful part of your life because remembering it hurts.
As children of today and tomorrow, we are also children of yesterday.
The past still travels with us and what it has been, makes us what we are.”

By Rabi Earl A. Grollmam

MEMORIAL DAY



For each grave where a soldier lies at his rest
For each prayer that is said today out of love
For each sign of remembering someone who died
Let us also give thoughts to the mothers and fathers,
the brothers and sisters, the friends and lovers
whom death left behind.

By Sasha

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.