



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.
(Note time change) at
St. Anthony of Padua Church

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Our Next Sharing Sessions

Thurs. April 7th, 2022*see note
Thurs. May 12th, 2022
Thurs. June 9th, 2022

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"

****Note: Due to a conflict with the church schedule, the April meeting will be held on Thursday, April 7th at 7:00 p.m.***



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
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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

Suzy Lavallee in loving memory of her son Joey Doucette

Special thanks to Dennis Gravelle and the **North Central Chapter** for their generous donation to our chapter.

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

Thoughts on the Month of May

The Spring flowers on your grave
Express the time of year.
It used to be a busy time...
Lots of happy days and cheer.

I still have all the Mother's Day cards
Made of construction paper and glue.
Verses written in a slant
That said "Mom, I love you."

I'll make no birthday cake this May
Nor see the graduation of your class.
The parades, ice cream socials and such
Are all a part of the past.

And though these weeks bring sadness,
When I remember them I have to smile.
May was really very special
And I'm glad we had it for a while.

Norma Herzog, TCF, Cincinnati, OH

3 Ways to Use Spring to Help You Through Your Grief

When we're grieving, sometimes all we want is a fresh start. You can't undo your loss, so the next best thing is to move forward. Spring is a time of "Rebirth." It's the perfect time of year to get a fresh start on anything. This spring, take advantage of the changing season to help you through your grieving process.

1. Make Time for Spring Cleaning

There's something about the beautiful weather and warmer temperatures that make us want to clean in the springtime. Clean anything; a room, your car, a closet, your entire house, your mind. This is a great opportunity to organize or update your memories. Have a shoebox of photographs you've been meaning to display? Take time to put together a new memorial with the pictures. If you're feeling really ambitious, brighten up your house with new paint colors.

Research shows that certain paint colors have an effect on our mood. Freshen up your living room with a sunny yellow accent wall or cover your bedroom walls with a cheery green color.

2. Plant Something

Spring is the perfect time to put your green thumb to the test. If you have room in your yard, plant a memorial

garden in honor of your loved one. If planting an entire garden isn't feasible, start small with a single plant. The growth and beauty of the plants or flowers will give you inspiration each day to live life. Spending time outside will help you to clear your mind and be at peace with your thoughts.

3. Start Something New

There's always more going on during the spring and summer months. Find out what's happening in the community, or think of a new hobby to try on your own. Pick your activity and make time for it at least once a week.

Your new activity will give you something to look forward to and will help take your mind off of your loss, even if it's only for an hour a week. The spring months can actually be hard on a grieving person. It's hard to watch everyone else moving forward with the changing season if you're not ready. But keep in mind, just because you're starting something new or changing things up doesn't mean you have to leave anything behind. Your loved one would want you to enjoy the relief from the cold and take advantage of the wonderful things that spring has to offer.

By Chelsea Hanson –
TCF North Shore, Boston

WE ARE STILL MOTHERS

We are still mothers
With empty arms and broken hearts
We are still mothers
With beautiful memories and broken
dreams
We are still mothers
With questions and no answers
We are still mothers
Slapped by reality every moment of the
day
We are still mothers
Who ache for the future of our children
although they're gone
We are still mothers
Outraged that life goes on around us
without our children
We are still mothers
Wondering how the sun shines so
brightly, without the lights of our
children
We are still mothers
Searching for purpose in ourselves and
finding only more questions
We are still mothers
Who lost the loves of our lives and yet
must still go on
We are still mothers
With empty arms and broken hearts.

From in loving memory
Printed in Alive Alone



Prayer for Spring

Like Springtime, let me unfold
And grow fresh and new
From this cocoon of grief
That has been spun around me.
Help me face the harsh reality of
Sunshine and renewed life
As my bones still creak from
The winter of my grief.
Life has dared to go on around me.
As I recover from the insult
Of life's continuance,
I readjust my focus to
Include recovery and growth
As a possibility in my future.
Give me strength to break out of
The cocoon of my grief.
But may I never forget it as
The place where I grew my wings,
Becoming a new person
Because of my loss.

James Heil
TCF/Vancouver

Pussy Willows

My first sign of spring
Those branches below my window
Bobbing in the breeze

I see fuzzy buds
Peeping through the green
Waiting for the Sun's rays

A Kiss of Promise
That takes Spring to Summer

Ann Bozoki
TCF-C Prince George, BC

A Father's Journey Through Grief

I would like to thank Rob Anderson who graciously agreed to share his thoughts on being a bereaved father. This article is dedicated to his son Brendan Anderson.

From my perspective as a bereaved parent, the most powerful and meaningful thing someone can do for us is to stick with us today, tomorrow and forever. It's a blessing to be a father and have the gift of children in our lives, but when they die, the blessing can at time (in the beginning) feel like a curse because of our incredible sorrow. Since we can't have our kids physically in our lives any longer, we want their memories brought to us in any form.

Acknowledgement of our kids is important to a bereaved parent because the calls, cards and gifts are about the lives of our kids. The memories are the living, breathing snapshots of them. Bringing that back is a very good thing. A powerful and much appreciated thing. The comfort comes when our children are remembered. If we cry when our child's name is brought up, you don't create hose tears. They're always only a heartbeat away. And, in most cases, those are tears from a grateful heart for remembering us. We appreciate so much that our children are not forgotten because once they die, they create no more memories. I never realized Brendon's past was so important until his future died.

As our support diminishes, we sometimes think our kids don't matter

anymore to others. When friends and family stop talking about them, stop saying their name or remembering birth and death days, we think our kids are no longer important in their lives. Ultimately it's only us who needs to remember our kids, but when others do it's very, very nice. By speaking their name, sharing a memory, a photo or memento you're also validating us as parents. My son is dead, but I will always be his father. His death took his life on earth, but it didn't take our relationship. I still talk to him, wish him a good day and ask him to visit. I can no longer actively parent Bren, but I now see myself as the parent and caretaker of his memories.

A father's grief differs from a mother's in that our grief also encompasses the role of the protector. And the possible guilt of not having been able to do that for our kids. As the father, one of our responsibilities as defined by our culture (and maybe all cultures) is to safeguard our children from harm. "Daddy will protect me" is learned from a very early age. When they died, many fathers experience extreme guilt because they didn't feel they did their job. Why didn't I take away the keys? Why didn't I see the symptoms earlier and act on them? Why? Why? That guilt can be hard to let go. I'm fortunate in that I never had that issue on my plate. But, I do know that "letting go" has been one of the most productive things I've done for myself.

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Especially letting go of the expectation of myself and expectations of what I think others want me to be.

I've come to realize that grieving and healing are synonymous terms. As we grieve we heal. Conversely, if we don't grieve, it's much harder to heal. It took a long time for me to understand that for myself. I used to think that grieving made my life worse. How could my tears and pain be doing me any good? But, I now know that the tears, release of anger, talking, sharing and confronting my pain are all part of my grief work which has helped me heal. Just like any other job, we have to do our work to reap the benefits. Grief work is the hardest job I will ever have.

I miss Bren with all my heart and soul, but I would not give up one moment of the pain if it meant giving up one moment of my love. I miss Bren so much because I love Bren so much.

Rob Anderson

A Father's Journey Through Grief
(The Comfort Company)
<http://www.thecomfortcompany.net/generic27.html>

Reprinted from "Always Loved – Never Forgotten"
weekly online newsletter



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



Grief is a tidal wave that overtakes you, smashes down upon you with unimaginable force, sweeps you up into its darkness, where you tumble and crash against unidentifiable surfaces, only to be thrown out on an unknown beach, bruised, reshaped...

Grief will make a new person out of you, if it doesn't kill you in the making.

By Stephanie Ericson

45TH TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 7



TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

We are very pleased to welcome back TCF's annual national conference, this year in person! This eagerly anticipated event for those bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who attend seeking renewed hope, ways of coping with their grief, and friendships made with those who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. With inspirational keynote speakers, numerous workshops including a wide variety of topics, and the always memorable candle lighting program on Saturday evening, culminating with the popular Walk to Remember on Sunday morning, and so much more, the TCF 45th National Conference is a much-needed gift that we give to ourselves!

This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made [online](#) at TCF's dedicated

reservation link. For those not able to make your reservations online, call the Marriott Reservation line at 877.688.4323. When calling be sure to mention *The Compassionate Friends National Conference* to receive your discounted room rate.

TCF's discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday.

A Bed For My Heart

“The moment our child died is now, yesterday, tomorrow, forever. It is the past, the present, and the future. It was not just one horrific moment in time that happened last whenever. It is not just the moment, the hour, the second, the millisecond our life became permanently divided into before and after.

... Our child dies all over again every morning we wake up.

And again every moment they are (yet again) missing.

And again every moment in between.

And again every breath we take.

Our child dies again every moment they are not here with us— for the rest of our lives.”

: : : Angela Miller : : :

Years have come and gone
and time surely drifted by.
I've searched for an 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 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 Father's Day".

Author Unknown

The Mother's Day Card

You handed it to me
With never a word.
Your eyes shone with feelings.
That no one else heard.

When I opened the envelope,
I wasn't prepared
Instead of the humor
We so often shared.

There were flowers and rainbows
And butterflies at play
In the beautiful meadow
On a sunshiny day.

Inside was a verse
Like a sentimental song
As though you knew
That you'd soon be gone.

This card must last me
A very long time
Is that why you chose
Such a special rhyme?

At the bottom inside
The heart you had done.
You wrote, "I love you Mom"
From Scott, your only son.

By Kathy Wolf
For her son
Scott Lee Pitman, 1987
TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

Birthday Remembrances

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



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Ava Auger - Jane Baron - Larry Carey, Jr
- Kasia Jurczyk - Alejandro Lorente -
David Powell - Doreen Salvas - Erin
Williamson

MAY BIRTHDAYS

John Barnett - Anne Dugas - Jacqueline
Gustafson - Amanda Keith - Brian
Romero - Scott Ruth - David Seaver -
Samuel Tharp - Christopher Tripp

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Jason Bileau - Ryan French - Treyton
Jarvis - Michael Martin - Joseph Meszaro
- Leeanne Sharolow

*My sincere apologies to
Paula Arsenault for missing her
son Drew's Birthday and
Anniversary in March*

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 - Katelyn Barrows -
Samantha Deiter - Kelly Marie Ondrasek -
Leeanne Sharolow - Michael Sprouse
- Ryan Wm. Woods

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Larry Carey Jr. - Dylan Thomas Mainville
- Kaylie Piekarczyk - Niles Alexander
Scott Seary - Christopher Tripp

JUNE ANNIVESARIES

Ryan Bahosh - John Barnett - Jason
Bileau - Brian Foley - Jayce Garcia -
Russell Harrington - Tara Hogan - Treyton
Jarvis - David Piekarczyk - Dylan Riel -
Brian Romero - Samuel Tharp

*Every attempt is made to
accurately list birthdays and
anniversaries. Please let me
know if you notice an error.*



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.