



**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

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[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

## Our Next Sharing Sessions

**Thurs. January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Thurs. February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Thurs. March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

*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  
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## Valentine Message

I send this message to my child  
Who no longer walks this plane,  
A message filled with love  
Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat  
When I ponder your early death  
As I think of times we'll never share  
I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love  
And for those who receive love, too  
For a parent the perfect love in life  
Is the love I've given you.

I'm thinking of you this day, my child,  
With a sadness that is unspoken  
As I mark another Valentine's Day  
With a heart that is forever broken.

Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX  
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



We don't return  
to who we once  
were after the  
loss of a child,  
instead,  
we begin a  
second life.

[www.touchinsouls.com](http://www.touchinsouls.com)

Devastating losses  
aren't  
Just tragic events  
that  
PASS thru your life.  
Devastating losses  
are  
Tragedies you live  
with  
The REST of your  
life.  
People around you  
often  
Don't get that.

~ John Pete

*The following is longer than I usually use in the newsletter, but I think you'll agree that it's a worthwhile read.*  
Anne

# Let Me Tell You Who I Am Now

*Post by Still Standing contributor Angela Miller of [A Bed For My Heart](#)*

I am still a person like you, with a life like yours, yet not. I am still a mother like you, yet not at all like you, all at the same time.

I wish there were some way you could understand me, without becoming who I am now.

You see, there's a pain I carry, unlike any pain you carry, unless you are a bereaved mother too.

This pain I take is *always* there.

It doesn't nap during the day or get safely tucked into bed at night. It follows me everywhere; it never leaves my side—like my son used to do, only grief is not cuddly, nor sweet.

*No, a mother's grief is a torturous life sentence that no one wants to live.*

It's bargaining for a different ending, over and over, one where no one dies.

It's the panic of it happening again, anytime, anywhere... It's the toxic self-

blame that never turns its finger around to blame itself.

It's the spiraling of obsessive thoughts, (*what if... if only?*) seeping its poison through every crevice of my mind.

It's the regret, so convincing that I failed as a mother, powerless to protect my child from death.

Yes, grief's emotions are as unpredictable as the ocean tide, crashing down on me to drown me alive.

I have three kids, not two. *My first son died.*

There, I said it.

I know you may not want to hear it.

Neither do I, yet I have to say it over and over and over to slowly wrap my mind around the incomprehensible truth.

My son is dead.

*It might make you uncomfortable for a moment, yet I am uncomfortable for a lifetime.*

Either I pretend he never existed, for your comfort, or, to my discomfort, this new life of mine comes with dreaded and sometimes hostile reactions—blank stares, awkward silences, big eyes bugging out of shocked faces; or worse, looks of despair, pity, shame, judgment; even, turning of backs, that walk away, leaving me in mid-sentence of my pain.

Or, worst of all, altogether ceasing to be my friend, upon discovering that, I am a bereaved mother.

Please, do not judge me by circumstances beyond my control.

Do not think you are more powerful than God, that this could never happen to you.

Do not imply by your words or your looks that I am a terrible mother because my child died.

Do not think I didn't try everything humanly possible to save my son from death.

*Let me tell you something, if a mother's love were enough to protect her children from all harm then children would never die.*

Please remember, I did not choose this version of my life.

I am living yet dying, breathing yet suffocating, laughing yet crying.

I am a mother like you yet a bereaved mother all at the same time.

I am a mother's worst nightmare, only it's not a dream.

*It's my life.*

While you complain about your kids spilling milk or painting on the wall, I swallow my grief whole, silently choking on my wish for my problems to be *just like yours.*

Paint splattered all over my walls, milk spilled, covering my kitchen floor.

I am aching for the signs of my toddler living, breathing, playing, *alive* in my home.

I am longing for the iterations of what could have been.

Instead, I have an empty chair at every meal, the contents of my son's entire life neatly stacked in sharpie-marked boxes in storage that now smells more like mildew and dust than of my son.

Instead, my lap seems full, but it is always one-third empty.

I'm left with a math equation that *never* equates.

No matter how many times I count, my children never add up to three.

*One is always missing.*

And a million more could never replace or erase the pain of missing the one who now lives only in the confines of my memory.

There is an eternal hole in my heart, in my life, the size and shape of him and only him, that no one and nothing will ever be able to fill.

*I am a bereaved mother, a grieving quasi-supermom; I straddle time and space.*

You might feel pulled in two directions, but let me tell you how it feels to be torn

between heaven and earth, as a mother to an angel and a mother to two living, breathing, laughing little boys – a mother to the living and the dead.

Let me tell you how it feels to have my son deleted; his existence denied because it makes people uncomfortable to hear *he lived and he died*.

He is as real to me now as he was in life.

He is not some inconvenient truth – he is my *son*. He will *always* be my son, just as I will *always* be his mother because *love never dies*.

Next time you see me in the grocery store, at the playground, or across the street, please remember:

I am still a person like you, with a life like yours, yet not.

I am still a mother like you, yet not at all like you, all at the same time.

I am a bereaved mother, a grieving quasi-supermom; I straddle time and space.

I wish there was some way you could understand me, without becoming who I am now.

***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.

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

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

Many thanks to all who provided snacks for our Candle Lighting. They made our event a little more special.

## ***Birthday Remembrances***

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



### **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Casey Bulger - Anthony Monopoli -  
Sean Seaver

### **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

Andrew Lauder

### **MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Michael Desrosiers - Timothy Lagesse -  
David Seibel - Mary Williams

## ***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 - Jason Gaumond -

### **FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

David Seaver -

### **MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**

Patrick Fischetti - Michael Hokanson-  
Dion - Timothy Lagesse -  
Mary Williams

## NEW YEAR'S WISH

I wish you gentle days and quiet  
nights.

I wish you memories  
to keep you strong.

I wish you time to smile  
and time for song...

And then I wish you friends  
to give you love,

When you are hurt and lost  
and life is blind.

I wish you friends and love  
and peace of mind

~~



## Winter Grief

Grieve as if to find eternal winter,  
Ache as if to banish every spring.

In your broken footsteps follows  
mourning

For the children who were with you  
once.

Grieve as if to keep the day from  
dawning,

Weep as if to kill each song you  
shared.

But be ready; when the sun grows  
stronger,

Spring will yet reclaim your loving heart.



## LET THERE BE LIGHT

The New Year comes  
when all the world is ready  
for changes, resolutions – great  
beginnings.

For us to whom  
that stroke of midnight means  
a missing child remembered,  
for us the new year comes  
more like another darkness.

But let us not forget  
That this may be the year  
When love and hope and courage  
Find each other somewhere  
In the darkness  
To lift their voice and speak:  
Let there be light.

*With Love from Sascha*



## **THE HOLIDAYS ARE BEHIND US**

**It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of each, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there amongst all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also thankfulness for the memory. Now we look out on a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the great energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb; a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard; our throat tight from the muscles pulled by tears, shed or unshed; our chests banded tightly by the muscles of a mourning heart. If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we lie these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we, too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth, deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be warmed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope, or of new acceptance, or of new understanding, or of new love. These are the new roots, born of our love of our child, forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deeper way.**

**Marie Andrews, TCF Southern Maryland**

## **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.