



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

MA/CT Border Towns Chapter
P.O. Box 481, Charlton, MA
01507-0481

July – August – September

2021 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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Our Next Sharing Sessions

July – Thursday the 8th
August – Thursday the 12th
September – Thursday the 9th

Even 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.

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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 for our newsletters and other materials.

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
Zack Jeneral

Sharing your thoughts...

Many of the poems and stories in our newsletter come from TCF members. If you have written a poem, or anything regarding your grief and how you've dealt with it, please allow me to share it in our newsletter. Or perhaps, like me, you aren't a writer, but you've read something that has brought you comfort or been meaningful to you. Pass it on to me along with the name of the author and I will print it here in the hopes that others will also be helped.

~ Anne



How Long Will The Pain Last?

"How long will the pain last?," a broken hearted mourner asked me. "All the rest of your life", I have to answer truthfully. We never quite forget, no matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation, part of us is removed and we have a scar for the rest of our lives. As years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, tasks that call for our full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that echoes see a photograph in someone's album, see a landscape that once we saw together, and it seems as though a knife were in the wound again. But not so painfully, and mixed with joy too, because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow, it brings happiness with it. "How long will the pain last?, " All the rest of your life". But the thing to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are proof of love. The more love, the more tears. If this is true, then how could we ever ask that the pain cease altogether. For the memory of love would go with it. The pain of grief is the price we pay for love.

By Martha White 1996
Borrowed from Groww
Heavenly Angels Newsletter

Welcome New Members

We know how difficult the first meetings can be, and 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.

Please note: Every month at our meetings, we have a Birthday and Remembrance Table. In the month of your child's birthday or death anniversary, or any time you would like, please bring a picture of your child to place on the table. You may also bring flowers, a candle, a special memento, or your child's favorite snack or soft drink to share. If you have a poem or story that has special meaning to you, we would like you to share it with us as well. We do this to celebrate our children's lives and share their special days with others who understand how difficult these days can be.

*When your lonely,
I wish you LOVE.*

*When your down,
I wish you JOY.*

*When things get complicated,
I wish you FAITH.*

*When things look empty,
I wish you HOPE.*



Fourth of July

Each year on the 4th of July we celebrate the birth of a great nation – a nation of people “united” in a dream. It was through hope, determination, and a bonded strength that the people of America strived to achieve their dream of freedom to be a free nation.

Nothing, however, is achieved without a strong will. We, too, as bereaved parents are fighting a battle to be free – free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be happy again. We want to be able to enjoy life again. You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for your dream. There is peace to be found in freedom!

Written by a member TCF Homdel, N.J.
<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/patriotic.html>



“You and I have never met, but yet we visit the same place every day. We both walk down the same unguided dark path. We cling to memories as if it’s our life support. Our minds drift off to that same place, the place that temporarily distracts us from our grief.

You’re the one person who knows the way my stomach feels — the unhealed knot in the center of my gut. You know the hollowness in my heart. Your tears are the same shape as mine, and they roll off the cheek without warning. You smile just like me. It’s a smile that has been perfected so others would stop wondering about your state of health and when or if you would pull through this.

Our deep exhale has been performed countless times, since the reminder to breathe is still necessary.

Only you understand the box in the closet where we keep the little things — the items that most people wouldn’t find a connection to. But we do. We can find that connection. Maybe it’s a ribbon, a stone or a piece of paper someone had written your child’s name on. An article of clothing that was last worn as we try desperately to preserve their smell.

This isn’t the same box with all the newborn items in it. This is a different box than the cutely decorated one that holds baby blankets, hospital bands, old pacifiers and first haircut clippings. This box is kept much further back in the closet, almost hidden as if it’s a secret.

You are the only one in this world who can look me in the eyes and say, “I get it.” Dear friend, how I wish you didn’t get it.

Like clockwork, I lie awake in my bed every night. I know you’re probably doing the same. As lonely as I feel sometimes, I know you’re feeling lonely, too. As indescribable as my pain is, I know you understand. It’s like a silent language that neither one of us wants to speak.

Our children’s stories are most likely different. The paths that led us here are probably nothing alike. It’s what happened in the after that forever bonds us now. It’s the pain of burying our child that makes our scars the same and our paths cross.

I wouldn’t wish this feeling on anyone, but yet to know you exist is somewhat of a selfish comfort for me. It’s the only place I find acceptance — to know that someone out there is just like me. I know with you that my tears aren’t measured and my sadness is never judged. The length of the time I grieve will never be rushed, all the wrong things will never be said and you understand sometimes silence is enough.

My sadness will never make you uncomfortable because our words fit together like a puzzle. Even though I’m a stranger, my heartache brings you to tears. You live with that forever emptiness, too.

So as I pray my nightly prayers, I always include you — the mother I’ve never met. You’re the other person out there who shares my same grief. I hope you find some comfort in knowing you’re not alone and that there’s someone out there like you.”

Written by Michelle Haxby

Birthday Remembrances

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



July Birthdays

Nicholas Aja - Ryan Bahosh - Emily Blouin -
John Judzynski - Jason Miner - Kelly Marie
Ondrasek - Hannah Marie Rabitor - Oliver
Tombeno - Ryan Townsend - Nicholas
Winfield - Ryan Wm. Woods

August Birthdays

Daniel Cording - Noah Desilet - Michael
Hokanson-Dion - Edward Masterson Jr. -
Tyler James Marsh - Sean Mathieu - Dylan
Riel - Kelly Sanders - Adam Schulze - Niles
Alexander Scott Seary - Michael Sprouse

September Birthdays

Samantha Deiter — Peter Diani Jr. - Amanda
Martin - Connor Michael Tibbets -
Sean Patrick Toomey - Robin Tyler - Scott
Vancelette

In Memory of our Children

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



July Anniversaries

Ashley Bates – Paul Comptois – Zachary
Jeneral - Steven Lamontagne – Brendon
Lange – Andrew Lauder – Sean Seaver –
Sean Patrick Toomey

August Anniversaries

Kevin Dabrowski – Nicholaus Gayewski –
Tyler James Marsh – Adam Schulze

September Anniversaries

Jesse James Davis – Joseph Doucette –
Katherine Kaiser – Anthony Monopoli – Erin
Williamson – Nicholas Winfield -



Did your Child's Death Ruin Your Life?

This was a question that I saw a parent ask on Facebook. The first knee jerk reaction is, YES! Because you cannot fathom your life without your child. But upon deeper thought, I realize, as for me, the answer was NO. It did not ruin my life, but it did change the course of my life. It set in motion a series of events that changed it.

When I looked at the remarks and comments from people regarding the question, there were over 1000 replies. The comments ranged anywhere from a lot of Yes, it destroyed my life, I am never happy anymore, it changed my life forever, to No, it did not, it threw me into a pit of darkness, and it took me awhile to recover and every day is a struggle, but I am surviving. I think in talking with people I work with that have lost children also, the general consensus among us is No. It did change my life and it changed me and changed how I look at life and people. It has made me more compassionate. I think it is different depending on how many children you have. If it is an only child, it may be different from someone who has multiple children. With other children, you are forced to make yourself go on for them.

While I realize that it does not matter if you had any other children when you lose one, there will always be an empty chair at the dinner table. One parent's loss is no more painful than the other. It does make a difference when you look at the lost potential of each child. If it is an only child, and the age at death and if they were not married or had any children of their own the legacy line ends with their death. There will be no grandchildren. No legacy line to move forward. It is lost potential, no matter how many children you have. A loss is a loss.

It also depends on how fresh the death is. In the beginning, the loss is devastating, and the first reaction is YES! I don't want to go on without my child. But as time goes by and you learn to make a new life, without your child in your life, it becomes a more gentle hurt. You realize that it did not ruin your life, you have survived the loss.

I am a little over 16 years into my loss of my daughter, and while I miss her every day, I have adapted to my life without her. I have survived my loss, so looking back at my grief journey, I would have to answer that as No, it did not ruin my life, but it certainly changed the course of my life tremendously and set in motion a domino effect of things that would be forever changed. In doing so, I have had to find a new and different normal life.

~Sharon Sharp
TCF – Jacksonville, FL

Those Left Behind

In the aftermath of the suicide of a family member or friend comes shock, anger, depression, loneliness and a profound sense of loss. The death is the more shocking when, as often, it is unforeseen – or when a severely damaged body is found or when identification is necessary. Denial of the nature of death of young children or adolescents by parents, even on the finding of a suicide note, compounds the initial denial. Anger (Why did he...) with corrosive guilt (Why didn't I ...) focuses on the loss, and the loneliness is deepened when baffled friends have difficulty and cannot extend consolation or support, a silence that is felt as the stigma that is attached to suicide. With terrible irony, just when a father and surviving siblings, (grieving in their own loneliness), need familial support, the loneliness of a mother is isolating or manifesting as over protectiveness of the siblings. Parents can feel shame, even blame, at their self-perceived failure as parents, and mothers are particularly prone to depression after the suicide of a child.

In contrast to the quiet gathering at the deathbed of one with chronic illness is the death an adolescent or young adult suffering from severe mental illness, with the final hopelessness of suffering not always known to the other members of the family, but when it is, some families, already in turmoil with members emotionally drained, experience both loss and some relief. Severe mental illness is one of the conditions that predispose young individuals to kill themselves.

Depression is at the heart of most suicides. How can those left behind be helped? There are many ways: the support of family and friends, religious faith, the passage of time, psychotherapy and counseling. An effective way has been through the establishment of local self-help support groups. These groups enable those who have experienced the suicide of a member of their family get together and exchange support, information and encouragement to build a meaningful future. From listening to others who have survived comes learning to survive and do better in life. The Compassionate Friends is one such group, indeed to provide this help is the mainspring and role for its existence and actions.

~Trevor Faragher

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept,
things we don't want to know but have to learn,
and people we can't live without but have to let go.*
~ author unknown

I do not need to get over it
I do not need to move on
I do not lack faith
I am not stuck in the past

I Am



Grieving

My pain needs to be experienced
My tears are my tribute
My journey isn't about steps and stages
My grief is the love and it will NEVER die

Alan pedersen - Angelsacrosstheusa.org

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.