



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS



December & January 2010

*The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive*

To all those newly bereaved, who are receiving this newsletter for the first time and to all our Compassionate Friends, we wish you were not eligible to belong to this group, but we want you to know that you and your family have many friends. We, who received love and compassion from others in our time of deep sorrow, now wish to offer the same support and understanding to you. Please know we understand, we care, and we want to help. You are not alone in your grief.

### Grief support after the death of a child

The Compassionate Friends is a national nonprofit, self-help support organization that offers friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. There is no religious affiliation and there are no membership dues or fees.

The secret of TCF's success is simple: As seasoned grievers reach out to the newly bereaved, energy that has been directed inward begins to flow outward and both are helped to heal.

**MEETINGS** at St. Paul's Parish House, 20 Fearing Road, Hingham (across the street from Citizen's Bank) at 7:30 PM on First and Third Mondays of the month.

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### REGIONAL COORDINATOR:

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### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

The Compassionate Friends

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

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## Phone Friends

If you are having a difficult day, or need someone to talk with, call a friend below.

Martha Berman (781) 337-8649

Laura Corkery (siblings) (781) 293-3986

LAC65@peoplepc.com

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Paula McDonald (781) 447-6811

Rick Mirabile (781) 740-1135

Trudy Cole-Sevier (781) 837-3171

### REMEMBER THE DATE

Candle lighting ceremony is Sunday evening, December 13, 2009, at First Parish Church, 24 River St., Norwell, MA. Our chapter ceremony starts at 6:30 pm, candle lighting at 7:00 pm.

## LEADERSHIP

For the past seven years it has been my privilege to serve as chapter leader most recently with Martha Berman serving as co-leader. For personal reasons, but more importantly for the chapter's continued growth, it is time for me to step down. I am delighted that our friend Rob Tyrrell has agreed to assume the role of co-leader in memory of his son Drew. Rob has given his time and talent selflessly since he joined us five years ago. I know he will bring new ideas and guide our chapter well.

It is most important that chapters continuously examine how we reach out the bereaved families with an eye toward improving that outreach enabling us to bring the TCF message to more individuals. This is best accomplished by having new people become involved in the various activities that we carry out with an eye toward future leadership. It takes much work to have a chapter that serves the area's needs well and I would encourage anyone who is so inclined to become involved. I can guarantee that you will not regret it. As I have said many times in the past- **"Helping is Healing"**.

From a personal standpoint it has been an honor to work with the wonderful talented people in our chapter. Over the past decade I have worn many different hats and look forward to continued work in TCF. For now this change will enable me to devote more time to my responsibilities as Regional Coordinator for our state. I thank all of you for your hard work as we continue our individual grief journeys and do our best to let families know that **"We need not walk alone"**. I would also like to thank all of you for your words of encouragement, prayers and notes which I have received in the last few months. They are all so much appreciated.

Peace,  
Rick Mirabile

## APPRECIATION

*In the spirit of the Thanksgiving holiday, it is time to remember to give thanks for the many blessing that we have received. We would this year especially like to give thanks for the unwavering leadership that Rick Mirabile has given to not only our chapter of The Compassionate Friends but to the organization as a whole. Rick has labored tirelessly to give comfort and support to hundreds if not thousands of grieving parents and siblings. In his role as Chapter Leader, Regional Coordinator, Newsletter Editor and National Meeting Speaker he has given his very heart and soul. Rick joined TCF after the death of his son, Richard, in 1997. His daughter, Lynn, died in 2004. Through it all, Rick showed us his courage and strength as he continued to give comfort, hope, guidance, support and friendship to so many of us. It is with love and respect that we use two tiny little words that mean so much to all of us, THANK YOU. Thank you for being Rick Mirabile. Thank you for being our leader. Thank you for being our friend.*

*From the entire membership,  
TCF Southshore Chapter, Hingham*

### FROM THE EDITOR

Where else but a roller coaster can you feel like you've left your stomach behind as you race down a steep incline or hang upside down, screaming your head off all the way? Folks, hold on tight and don't let go! The holiday season from Thanksgiving to Christmas and through New Years, as well as birthdays and anniversaries so dramatically impacts the grieving process in so many various and differing ways. The grip of grief does not lessen during the holiday season but seemingly increases as each day draws us near. No matter what time of year you lose a loved one, it is difficult and at times perhaps even seemingly impossible to imagine ever enjoying a holiday again. For Donna and I, the coaster may occasionally and briefly stop at the top of the hill, but the eventual ride down is riddled with guilt and confusions if we even suspect that we enjoyed ourselves but for a fleeting moment knowing that our loved ones are gone from us forever. This is a natural feeling we are told.

Holidays are a time for family and friends and having spent many holidays with them it's almost impossible to simply erase the memories because our children are no longer with us. At our TCF group meetings many have expressed they don't feel like celebrating because things have changed and they remember of times past. Most families experienced traditions that just never can be the same to us with out the presence of all our children. There is no set way to grieve and no specified time frame for it to last. At TCF group meetings, I have learned from those who have expressed, certain things that they do during the holidays to make the time go by a little easier. Our group meetings may not offer you complete resolution, but I do assure, you will find that the group listens, provides some comfort, can be trusted, assures confidentiality, is available, supports without preaching and encourages and fosters self care. Remember the reality that the anticipation of the holidays without your child or sibling is at times harder than the actual holiday itself and we have all by now started to anticipate.

Don't feel obligated to partake in the celebrations. If you feel as though you would like to celebrate, try not to let yourself feel so guilty. Come to TCF group meetings, use the TCF on line support chat rooms, sign onto TCF Facebook, call the TCF phone list and please do not forget, "You need not walk alone." Here at TCF, **we are family!!!**

From Donna and I, may you and your family find peace, comfort and encouragement in moving forward into and beyond this holiday season. And in speaking for the entire group membership, speedy recovery wishes to all those now in need.

Kenneth L. Kaplan ~ Newsletter Editor

### Editor's Solicitation

I hope you can find meaning in reading this newsletter edition. Even though I am producing, it is your newsletter and it should contain as you so desire. Newsletters are a wonderful way to keep communication within our group and to provide outreach and support to those in need. My objective is to provide knowledge, current information, an opportunity to write about our children/siblings and experiences on how to proceed. Do you have a tip to share? Send your ideas to our newsletter, I would love to include it. I am looking for short, simple submittals everyone can appreciate.

If you would like to submit an article, announcement, poem, short story or any other meaningful to you items for publication in future editions, please send via email. Send your submittals, suggestions and questions to [kennykap13@yahoo.com](mailto:kennykap13@yahoo.com). Planned publication dates are the first day of every other month beginning with February of each year.

Kenneth L. Kaplan  
Newsletter Editor



### **FROM THE CHAPTER LEADER**

*As I look at our chapter's roster of names I think of how many are facing their first holiday season as bereaved parents—or second which may be more painful as the shock that encompassed us has faded. No matter how many years have passed we look at everyone rushing about gathering “stuff” and feel as if we live in another world, which is exactly what we do. We anticipate and worry about how we will survive the Season. The lights, music and memories all seem to accentuate our sadness. We know that the only gift we want will never be ours and feel we have nothing to give our children who have left us. But maybe this might be a year when we discover a new type of gift.*

*Some parents find gifts from their children very early on in grief, perhaps in the form of a sign that they are OK, a dream, a happy memory shared by a friend or relative, or a new found talent that has changed our lives. Some have the gift of surviving children or perhaps a grandchild to connect them with their son or daughter who has died. Some have neither. Some are still searching for a sign, wondering if it will ever be found. The first time I heard the words “finding the gifts and finding joy again” I did not understand what they meant. Since then I have come to believe that searching for gifts that our children leave us and sharing them with others is a major part of our grief work. Sometimes we have to shed some of the anger, guilt, resentment and bad memories that we all harbor in order to make room in our hearts for these gifts.*

*Regardless of our individual circumstances we all share one great gift that we receive and give— that is the gift of each other. We all share in our TCF family and that is a gift to be valued. During this difficult season I hope those of you who are early in your journey will make use of the many TCF friends waiting with outstretched arms. Those of you who are further along—give someone the gift of encouragement. None of us need ever walk alone.*

*Over the last eleven years I have come to anticipate the Candle Lighting Memorial as the focus of the season. Here we may all share the memories of our children, honor them and keep their memories alive. It is a day that everyone who attends will leave uplifted, supported and united with so many bereaved parents throughout the world. As we light candles in our children's memories may we all share in a moment of peace as we recall our children's lives as well as their deaths.*

*As the calendar year draws to a close I hope each of us may enter 2010 a little less hopeless, a little more supported, a little bit stronger, and a little more able to reach out to give and to receive.*

*Peace  
Rick Mirabile*

*(It is Rick's stated to me desire that he would like very much to convey his meaningful thoughts to the group at this time, but as a consequence of his ongoing medical condition and treatments, he requested that I now assist him in conveying his meaningful thoughts as he had expressed in his past and prior newsletter messages to the group. I selected this particular message on behalf of Rick which he authored and printed in the Winter 2007 newsletter edition. In my now reading, it has struck and impressed upon me that although Rick and all of us are but one person, we all do have limits. Limits to our time, compassion, emotional well being and to our giving of our-self to others. In those regards, it is abundantly clear to me that Rick, the person, is the gift that no matter what the circumstances are, just keeps on giving! I made minor editorial changes primarily as related to the dates. ~ Kenneth L. Kaplan)*  
10/16/09

### **Worldwide Candle Lighting**

***Excitement has been building as the thirteenth Worldwide Candle Lighting, Sunday December 13, 2009 approaches. Our chapter ceremony starts at 6:30 pm as candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time.***

*(Snow date, Tuesday December 15, 2009. If there is severe weather conditions call (781) 749-3401 and there will be a message if the service is postponed.)*



## Tradition, Tradition, Tradition

Even in normal times, tradition isn't what it always is cracked up to be, and sometimes "tradition" gets in the way of sanity. Often we cling to tradition because it's easier, we don't want to offend others, we don't want to be embarrassed, or we don't know what else to do. When you are a grieving parent, giving into tradition can drive you over the edge.

I found myself in the "tradition predicament" regarding putting up a tree, the first Christmas holiday after my son, Chad, died. I didn't want, need, or have the energy to put up a tree. Yet other family members wanted a tree and they wanted it as it always had been, big, bright, and decorated with ornaments they had purchased or made through the years. What eventually took place, with regard to a tree, changed our holiday forever and it has been a good thing for everyone involved.

I don't know the exact circumstances of how our "new tradition" came into being that first year. But I do remember frustration, tears, and upset people. I also remember my daughter saying to me it was her Christmas too and *she needed a tree*. It was her older brother, the one she remembered getting up with every Christmas morning when she was little, that was dead and she had to have something so she could deal with the emptiness. So she came up with a plan. She and her father would go find the tree and she would take care of the decorations all by herself.

That was ten Christmases ago and this year, once again, my husband and my daughter will leave early in the morning a week before Christmas and hunt for a tree, just the two of them. When they come home, I will prepare breakfast while they get the tree in the holder and move the furniture. We will sit down together and enjoy our meal and then my husband and I will leave for several hours. During that time we will do what ever we feel like doing. We have gone to the cemetery, gone for walks, gone to the bookstore, visited friends etc. When we return my daughter will have decorated our Christmas tree and the whole house!

Every year the tree has been different limited only to my daughter's imagination and the budget we keep her on. She didn't use our regular ornaments for a while and when she did, she told me ahead of time and said how meaningful it was for her to be the one who put Chad's ornaments back on the tree.

We have continued this "new tradition" to this day. Now, I find angel ornaments to put on the tree to honor our missing angel, and enjoy with my husband, sons, and family my daughter's traditional tribute to her brother.

This "changing tradition" has been so healing. Our family has had the brightness and beauty that a lighted tree can provide, and I have been able to save my energy for other things I wanted to do.

During the next few weeks, I hope you will make the activities of the season as stress free as you can. I hope that you will feel free to experiment with new traditions, knowing there is no "right way" to go through this season only "your way." I hope that you will remember Christmas is only one day and that the time leading up to that "one day" will probably be more difficult than the actual day. And finally, I hope for peace in your hearts if not today then tomorrow or the tomorrow after, or the tomorrow after that.

Take care ...

Sue Anderson

CHAPTER SHARING PAGE



This Chapter Sharing Page is for you. If you would like to submit an article, announcement, poem, short story or any other meaningful to you items for publication in future editions, we would love to include it.

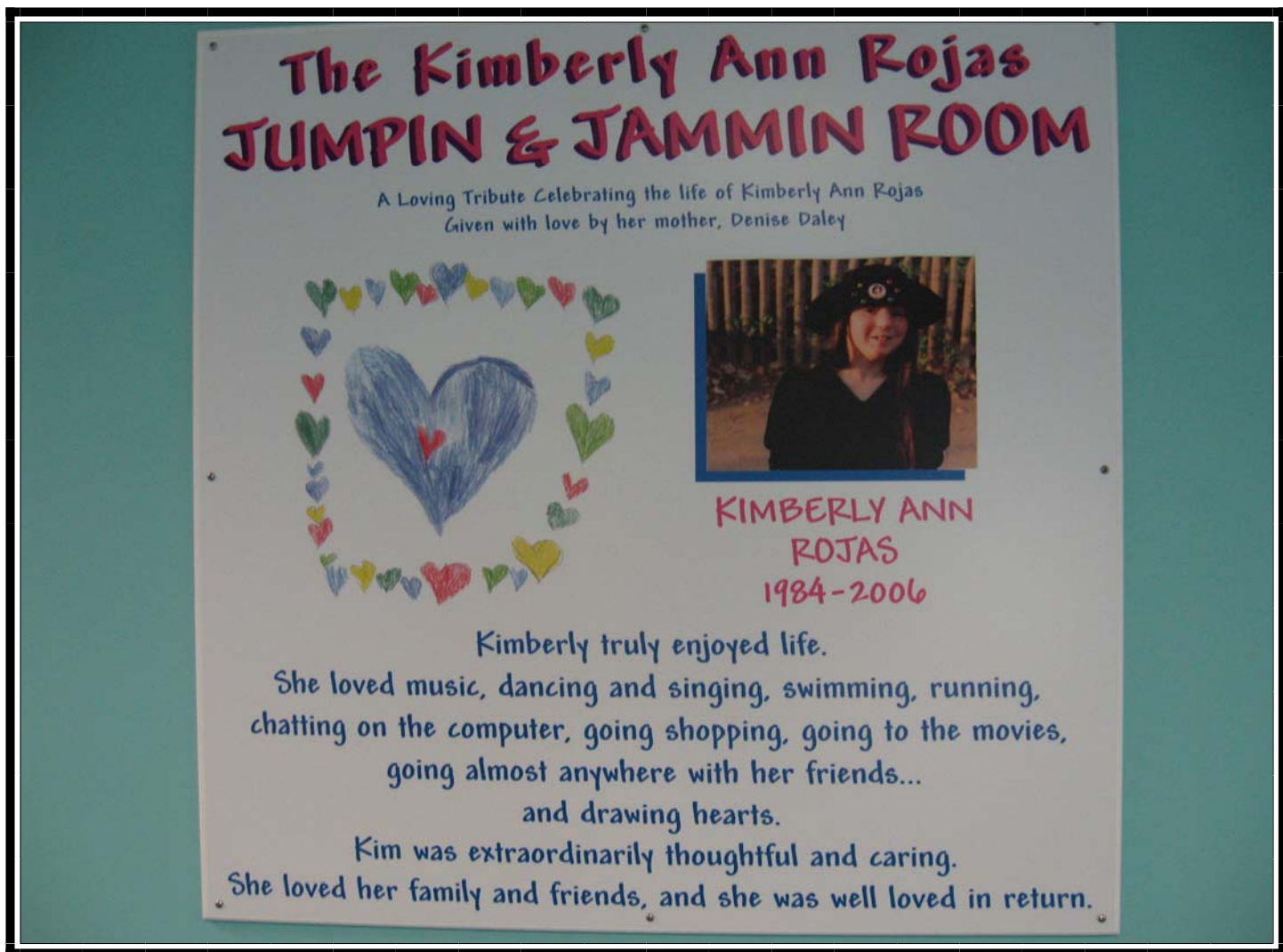
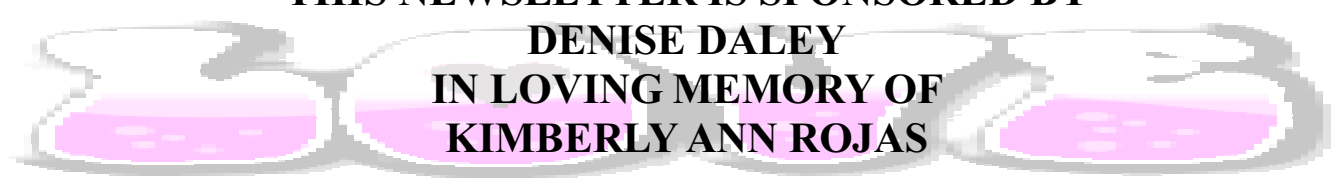


Photo of a plaque that is on the wall of a room recently dedicated in my daughters memory at the South Shore Mental Health's Early Intervention Program located in Quincy, MA.

Denise Daley

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS SPONSORED BY  
DENISE DALEY  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
KIMBERLY ANN ROJAS**



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### After Losing My Son Billy; If You Ask Me How I'm Doing?

(Written by Joan Smith, South Shore Hingham TCF Chapter, Billy's mom)

To my family and friends, if you ask me how I'm doing, I'll say not well. The truth is that I will never be ok. A big piece of my heart is missing and the pain cannot be explained. You might look at me and think I look fine but behind closed doors I cry all the time and I just want to scream. The things I miss the most are the hugs, the phone calls, and mostly his voice saying I love you mum.

My question every day is WHY? Why my son? People say life goes on, yes it does but it is a struggle. I try not to be in the place of darkness and pain for my family and friends. I live in the moment and struggle to go on. I just want the past back and I fear the future. I feel as if my life has no meaning anymore and it is difficult to be happy. There are no answers on how to go on.

To my son Billy I know, you have always tried to protect me from the things that would hurt me and I know that as big and as strong a guy you were you could not stand to see anyone you loved suffer. I can still hear you trying to tell me to knock it off and that you don't like seeing me like this, but it's not easy because I love you so much.

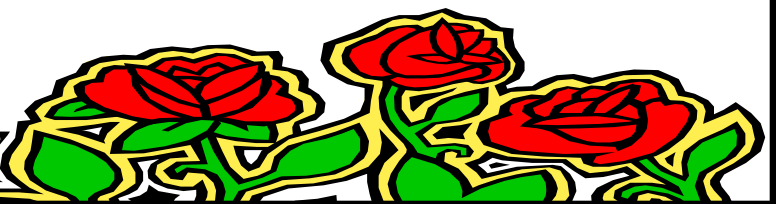
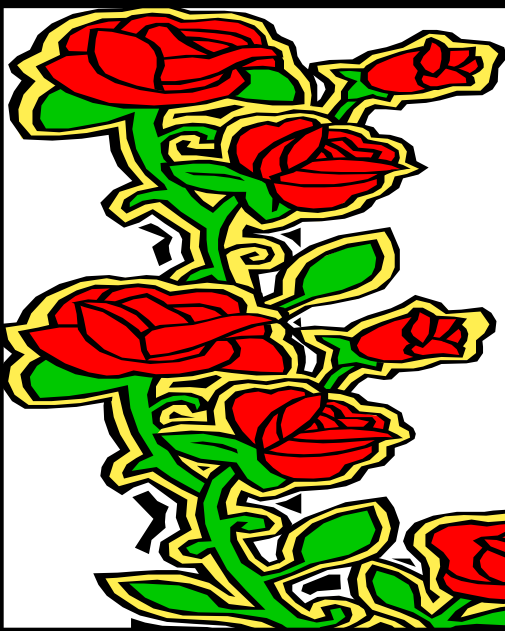
I picture you together with your Father, Ma, Yaya, other family members and friends that have gone to heaven before you, and I smile knowing someday I will see you again and in believing this I will try, but I need you to know that I need to have this pain and I know it can never go away.

Always and forever  
Billy's "mum"

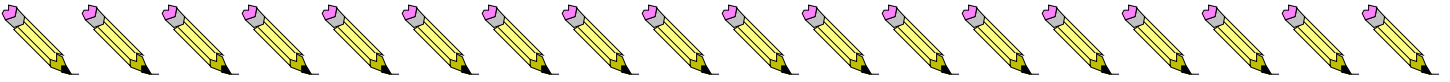
### IN LOVING MEMORY OF MATTHEW JOHN STEUTERMAN

(Matthew is the loving son of the late Deacon John & Jean Steuterman)

*They say there is a reason, Matt, they say that time will heal.  
But neither time nor reason, will change the way we feel.  
For no one knows the heartache, that lies beyond our smiles.  
No one knows how many times, we have broken down and cried.  
We want to tell you something, Matt, so there won't be any doubt.  
You're so wonderful to think of, but so hard to live without.  
We love and miss you, your family and friends.*

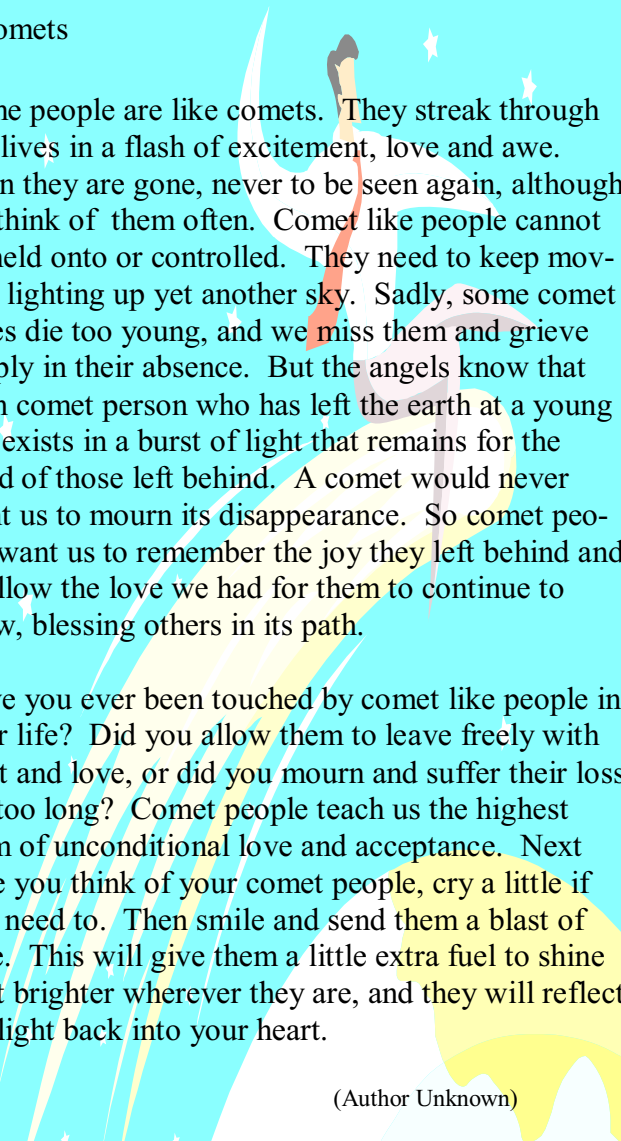


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### Comets



Some people are like comets. They streak through our lives in a flash of excitement, love and awe. Then they are gone, never to be seen again, although we think of them often. Comet like people cannot be held onto or controlled. They need to keep moving, lighting up yet another sky. Sadly, some comet types die too young, and we miss them and grieve deeply in their absence. But the angels know that each comet person who has left the earth at a young age exists in a burst of light that remains for the good of those left behind. A comet would never want us to mourn its disappearance. So comet people want us to remember the joy they left behind and to allow the love we had for them to continue to grow, blessing others in its path.

Have you ever been touched by comet like people in your life? Did you allow them to leave freely with light and love, or did you mourn and suffer their loss for too long? Comet people teach us the highest form of unconditional love and acceptance. Next time you think of your comet people, cry a little if you need to. Then smile and send them a blast of love. This will give them a little extra fuel to shine a bit brighter wherever they are, and they will reflect the light back into your heart.

(Author Unknown)

This poem was left at the grave site of David Morrison, Nancy and Rudy Morrison's son and they never found out who had left it.

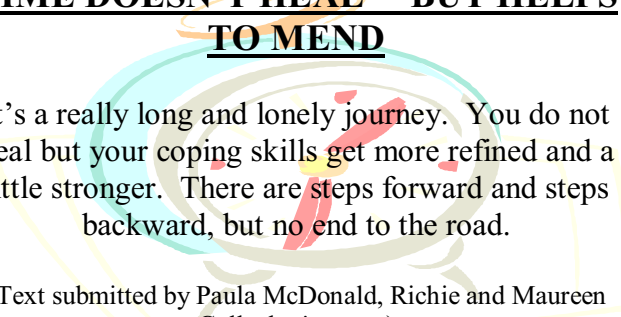
### Precious Son

I Wish I Could See You One More Time  
Come Walking Through My Door  
But, I Know That Is Impossible  
I Will Hear Your Voice No More  
I Know You Can Feel My Tears  
And You Don't Want Me To Cry  
Yet, My Heart Is Broken  
Because I Can't Understand Why  
Someone So Precious Had To Die  
I Pray That God Will Give Me Strength  
And Somehow Get Me Through  
As I Struggle With This Heartache  
That Was Caused By Losing You

In Precious Memory Of William H Smith  
Who Walked Through Heaven's Gate  
April 2009

(Submitted by Joan Smith, Billy's mom.)

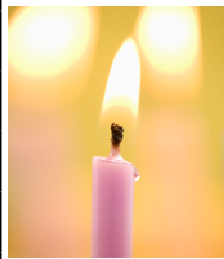
### TIME DOESN'T HEAL ~ BUT HELPS TO MEND



It's a really long and lonely journey. You do not heal but your coping skills get more refined and a little stronger. There are steps forward and steps backward, but no end to the road.

(Text submitted by Paula McDonald, Richie and Maureen Gallagher's mom.)

### LIGHT A CANDLE !!!



If you are unable or can't attend a worldwide candle lighting service, we hope you'll light a candle on December 13, in your home or wherever you may be. Light your candle with friends and family, or alone, but with the knowledge you'll be joining hundreds of thousands around the world that will be doing the same.

# SIBLINGS

FOR BEREAVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS



## What Are We Waiting For?

My brother-in-law opened the bottom drawer of my sister's bureau and lifted out a tissue-wrapped package. "This," he said, "is not a slip. This is lingerie." He discarded the tissue and handed me the slip. It was exquisite: silk, handmade, and trimmed with a cobweb of lace. The price tag with an astronomical figure was still attached. "Jan bought it the first time we went to New York eight or nine years ago. She never wore it. She was saving it for a special occasion. Well, I guess this is the special occasion."

He took the slip from me and put it on the bed with the other clothes we were taking to the funeral home. His hands lingered on the soft material for a moment. He slammed the drawer shut and turned to me. "Don't ever save anything for a special occasion. Every day you're alive is a special occasion."

I remembered those words through the funeral and the days that followed when I helped him attend to all the sad chores that follow an unexpected death. I thought about them on the plane returning home. I thought about all the things she hadn't seen or heard or done. I thought about the things that she had done without realizing that they were special.

I still think about his words and how they've changed my life. I read more and dust less. I sit on the deck and admire the view without fussing about the weed in the garden. I spend more time with my family and friends and less time in committee meetings. Whenever possible, life should be a pattern of experience to savor, not endure. I try to recognize those moments now and cherish them. I don't save anything. We use our good china for every special event—such as losing a pound, getting the sink unstopped, or discovering the first camellia blossom. I wear my good blazer to the market if I feel like it. I don't save my good perfume for special parties. "Someday" and "one of these days" are losing their grip on my vocabulary. If it's worth seeing, hearing, or doing, I want to see, hear, and do it now.

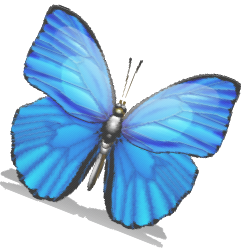
I am not sure what my sister would have done had she known that she wouldn't be here for the tomorrows we all take for granted. I think she would have called family members and a few close friends. She might have called a few former friends to apologize and mend fences for past squabbles. It's these little things left undone that would make me angry if I knew my hours were limited—angry because I put off seeing good friends, angry because I hadn't written certain letters that I intend to write, angry and sorry that I didn't tell my husband and daughter often enough how much I truly love them. I am trying not to put off, hold back, or save anything that would add laughter and luster to our lives. Every morning when I open my eyes, I tell myself that it's a special day.

Ann Wells  
TCF, Laguna Niguel, CA

"Those we love don't go away, They walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near, Still loved, still missed and very dear."

- Anonymous





# Love Gifts

**A LOVE GIFT IS A CONTRIBUTION THAT IS GIVEN TO TCF IN MEMORY OF A CHILD WHO HAS DIED. THE FUNDS ARE USED TO AID THE WORK OF OUR CHAPTER FOR THE NEWSLETTER, POSTAGE, BOOKS, AND OTHER NEEDED MATERIALS. ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. OUR THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SUPPORTED US IN THIS WAY.**

In Loving Memory of Robert Joseph Caputo  
Joseph & Flo Caputo

In Loving Memory of Joseph Francis Palimeri  
Kathleen A. Palimeri

In Loving Memory of Kimberly Ann Rojas  
Denise Daley

In Loving Memory of All The Children  
South Shore Hingham TCF Chapter

In Loving Memory of My Sweet Boy  
Michael Jonathan Burak  
*"You will be with me forever."*  
Love ~ Your Mom

In Loving Memory of Rodney E. Andrews, Jr.  
*"Always in our hearts."*  
Rodney & Janet Andrews

In Loving Memory of Roger Alan Smith  
*"Always in our hearts."*  
Rodney & Janet Andrews

Please send your love gifts by mail to **TCF South Shore Chapter, 147 North Street, Hingham, MA 02043. Love Gifts** can also be given to your meeting leaders at the meetings. Use the form below to assure they are processed exactly as you request. (**NEWSLETTER ITEMS** should not be sent to this address.)

**Please note:**

Love notes must be received by the **1st** of the month before you wish the note to appear in the newsletter.  
Items for the **February** Newsletter must be received by **January, 1st.**

Love Gifts for future dates may be sent at any time. Month to be published: \_\_\_\_\_

LOVE GIFT received from \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF: \_\_\_\_\_

Message: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*A wonderful way to remember your child is to sponsor either the printing or mailing costs of a newsletter. If you are interested please contact the newsletter editor, Kenneth Kaplan, [kennykap13@yahoo.com](mailto:kennykap13@yahoo.com).*

**SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER  
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS  
147 NORTH STREET  
HINGHAM, MA 02043**

**Return Service Requested  
Postmaster: Dated Material, Please Deliver Promptly.**



*Even if it's been a while since you've been to a meeting, you are always welcome to join us. If your newly bereaved, bring a relative or a friend if you wish. Share your feelings, or say nothing and just listen: but please come.*

***"You need not walk alone"***

***TO OUR NEW MEMBERS***

*Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether it will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief.*



***TO OUR OLD MEMBERS***

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK... what it would have been like for you if there had been no "oldies" to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them that you heard, "your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer".*

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