



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS



October & November 2009

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 grievors 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.

CHAPTER PHONE:

(781) 749-3401

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS:

Rick Mirabile (781) 740-1135

Rmirabile@comcast.net

Martha Berman (781) 337-8649

mmartha1@comcast.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Kenneth L. Kaplan (781) 214-9999

73 Manomet Avenue

Hull, MA 02045

kennykap13@yahoo.com

CHAPTER WEBSITE:

www.tcf-southshore.org/home.html

REGIONAL COORDINATOR:

Rick Mirabile (781) 740-1135

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

The Compassionate Friends

PO Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522

Toll-free (877) 969-0010

national website: www.compassionatefriends.org

email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org



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

Judy Ferreira (617) 481-0149

Donna Kaplan (781) 214-9999

dlkrn59@yahoo.com

Paula McDonald (781) 447-6811

Rick Mirabile (781) 740-1135

Trudy Cole-Sevier (781) 837-3171

REMEMBER THE DATE

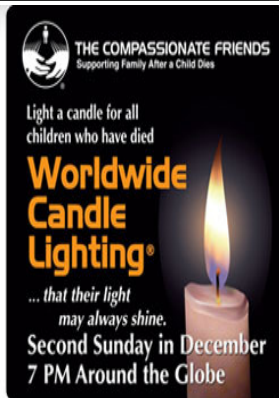
Candle lighting ceremony is Sunday evening, December 13, 2009, at First Parish Church, 24 River St., Norwell, MA. Our chapter ceremony starts at 6:30 pm, candle lighting at 7:00 pm.

FROM THE EDITOR

As we approach the holiday season our emotions ebb and flow in great confusions over our losses and grieving. While people all around us are planning and absorbed in the excitement and enjoyment, we find ourselves experiencing depression, anxiety and feeling all alone. As a society, I think we lose track of how common it is to be experiencing grief and loss and that it happens more often than people understand. To grieve is not to lose your mind but it does in part impair thinking straight, bring on jumbled thoughts and at times involve not fully knowing what is going on around you. Some of the coping mechanisms I have learned by attending TCF chapter meetings are to talk to other members, allow ourselves to grieve, not to fight the process, not to rush it, keep on coming to meetings, take one day at a time, expect the unexpected, keep moving forward and know that everyone grieves in their own way. A personal favorite meeting suggestion that Donna and I find great connection with, is the idea that at the holiday dinner table, we place a setting for Jordan, we light a candle with his picture on it and we place several meaningful belongings of his by his setting. We do look forward to the occasion of sitting with him. It is very important in my opinion that during this holiday season, you keep on coming to TCF group meetings and meet others who want to share with you in the support and encouragement of your moving forward. It is the vision of TCF that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone that finds us will be helped. "We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends." I also now wish, on behalf of our group, to send well wishes to all who have health concerns and hopes for your speedy and full recoveries.

Kenneth L. Kaplan
Newsletter Editor

Worldwide Candle Lighting



Excitement has been building as the thirteenth Worldwide Candle Lighting December 13, 2009 approaches. The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age from any cause. As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

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. Planned publication dates are the first day of every other month beginning with February of each year.

Kenneth L. Kaplan
Newsletter Editor



Halloween . . . Still a Holiday to Remember

Two Halloweens have now passed since my 8-year-old Stephanie and 5-year-old Stephen left us to live with God.

Even before the kids were old enough to go trick or treating, I still recall their delight at the costumes worn by all the neighborhood kids who came to the door. I still remember how thrilled Stephen was to be handing out the candy when he was only one and half years old. We still have a picture of him holding the plate of goodies. If you look close, you can see where he took a bite out of one of the candy bars (with the wrapper on) and set it back on the plate.

I can still remember the all too few times I was able to take my children out trick-or-treating. I remember my daughter dressed up as a nurse, offering to “fix-up” all those other trick or treaters who were obviously hurting with all that fake blood they were wearing.

I remember Stephen wearing his great pumpkin outfit. We stuffed it so full of padding that when he fell down, not only did he not get hurt, he had to be physically picked up because he was flailing his arms around like a beetle on its back.

I can still see Stef holding Stephen’s little hand and patiently leading him up the walkway and helping him hold open his bag so that the candy would find its mark. She always made certain he said thank you for the candy. It usually came out “thank-woo.”

The first Halloween following their deaths I remember driving home with tears streaming down my face as I watched the other trick-or-treaters roaming up and down the streets. My wife and I fled our home, depositing bags of candy for our next door neighbors to hand out for us. Last year we found the courage to stick around and greet the ghosts and goblins who found their way to our door. The funny thing was, we felt as dressed up as the trick-or-treaters. We were wearing our “happy face” masks.



The memories are now starting to fade of the Halloweens before our children died. It won’t be too long and I’ll be leading Christopher, our new son who is now a year old, up those driveways just like I did before. I feel sad that Stef and Steve can’t be there. But you know, I have a feeling that if I hold out my hands and close my eyes, two little gloved hands will slip into mine and I’ll again hear in unison, “Just one more house Daddy!”

Wayne Loder, Lakes Area TCF MI

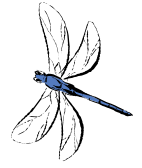
Broken Hearts Can Heal and *The Gift of Knowing* by Debbie Crews has been donated to the TCF lending library collection. “I hope they bring the same peace to someone else they bring to me.” ~ Mary Nisula

Grief Materials--Looking for a particular grief book? Look no further than Centering Corporation, the official recommended grief resource center of The Compassionate Friends. With the largest selection of grief related resources in the United States, Centering Corporation will probably have just about anything you're looking for-or they'll be able to tell you where to find it.

Call Centering Corporation for a catalog at 402-553-1200 or visit their website at www.centering.org. When ordering, be sure to mention you are with The Compassionate Friends and all shipping charges will be waived.



Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving Marks Beginning of Holiday Madness and Sadness

In our society we have turned the holidays into a never ending round of parties, shopping, cooking, preparations for guests or travel and stress, lots and lots of stress. It begins in October with the not so subtle reminders from our friendly retail stores. Most of us dread this time of year because as members of Compassionate Friends, we have one more item on our list and it invariably is at the top.....my child is gone.....how can I handle the holidays?

This will be my third Thanksgiving without my son. We had 35 wonderful Thanksgiving celebrations together, and now it's just me. My only child is gone, my grandchildren now live solely in their mother's world. I am not a part of that world.

But I am learning to cope with this reality. I am learning that I can hold on to the traditions that don't cause me sadness and let go of those that do. As bereaved parents we fall into a unique category. As humans we accept that the loss of parents, spouses, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends and acquaintances is inevitable. But never, never, were we taught or conditioned to the idea that our children would or could precede us in death. The very notion of this shook us to our core.

Now we have lost our child to death. Nobody prepared us for this mind numbing loss. The rules have been broken. We have no coping skills. Our friends usually can't help. Our families try, but until one endures a loss of this magnitude, the ability to fully comprehend the never ending rounds of sadness is simply not there.

We do have a support system....we can choose to participate or simply be there, in the moment, at our Compassionate Friends meetings. Here we find our most meaningful and helpful connection with other parents....parents who are walking the road we now walk. These bereaved parents are here to help us on this unfamiliar road. They cannot answer every question because the answers don't exist to most questions. When will this pain end? When will life go back to "normal"? There are different types of pain and new kinds of normal. We gather each month to help each other, to lean on each other, to find hope in each other's ability to function. From this meeting of kindred souls we do derive some solace, some peace and some hope.

I have watched the newly bereaved, raw in their sadness when they first attend a meeting. As the months move forward, I begin to see a change in these parents. Each changes in a different way, for each experiences their loss and their grief process in a different way. Some changes aren't apparent for months, even a year or two. Learning that we are not alone in the grievous burden of our loss is comforting. Learning that others have developed ways to cope with the holidays, the birthdays, the death anniversaries and other special occasions gives us the hope that we, too, will one day feel comfortable in our new "normal."

I have chosen to accept this group of gentle, kind and compassionate friends as an integral part of my life. The first holidays were horrible. I learned that I had to do what I felt was right. I learned to let go of the expectations of others and live in the moment. Even if I plan to do something and change my mind, I feel no guilt. I learned that those who truly love me understand. I have found that I am truly becoming myself....my new self. It is a slow process. There are setbacks.

Holidays are extremely difficult for every parent who has lost a child.....it matters not how long ago our child died. The pain is fresh, new and raw at this time of year. This is the season for leaning on our compassionate friends, for asking questions, expressing fears, anxieties, doubts, depression and anger and for finding the comfort, hope and understanding that each of us so desperately seeks.

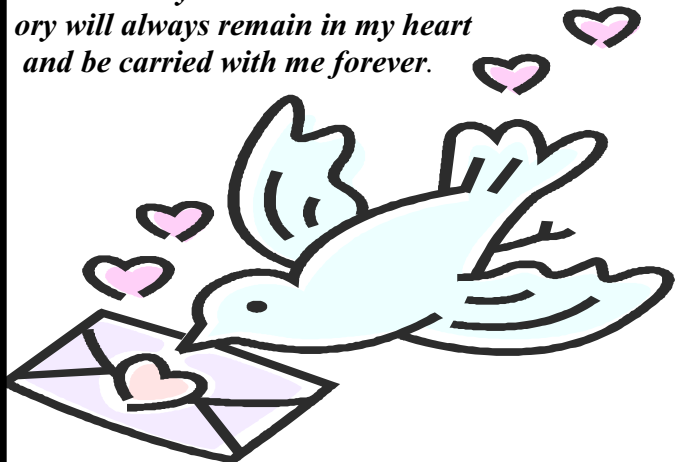
Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX
November, 2005





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.

In Loving memory of a son and daughter who were loved by all who knew them and whose memory will always remain in my heart and be carried with me forever.



Sending you birthday hugs in heaven.
I love you,
Mama

(Text submitted by Paula McDonald in loving memory of her children, Richie and Maureen Gallagher.)

Photo taken by Jordan Dale Cibley in his senior year of high school. Jordan had a life long passion for photography and was planning on attending college to study graphic arts just prior to his passing.

(Jordan is the son and step-son of Donna and Kenneth Kaplan)



He Only Took My Hand

Last night while I was trying to sleep,
My son's voice I did hear
I opened my eyes and looked around,
But he did not appear.

He said, "Mom you've got to listen,
You've got to understand
God didn't take me from you, mom
He only took my hand.

When I called out in pain that night,
The instant that I died,
He reached down and took my hand,
And pulled me to his side.

He pulled me up and saved me
From the misery and pain.
My body was hurt so badly inside,
I could never be the same.

My search is really over now,
I've found happiness within,
All the answers to my empty dreams
And all that might have been.

I love you all and miss you so,
And I'll always be nearby.
My body's gone forever,
But my spirit will never die!

And so, you must all go on now,
Live one day at a time.
Just understand -

God did not take me from you,
He only took my hand.

(Author Unknown)

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

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.

Michael's Story

It's that time of year again. Summer is passing so quickly and Fall will soon be here. The month of September brings many changes. School begins. Days grow shorter. The leaves begin to change color. And the anniversary of the passing of my son, Michael Jonathan Burak, looms ahead. It will be 5 years since Michael left this earth in the physical sense. But Michael is far from gone. He is with me every day.

As a young child, Michael loved to draw. He drew the most creative pictures. He loved Legos and built incredible structures. Michael loved animation. He enjoyed fantasy and told the most fantastic stories. Stories that you knew were fiction; but were so believable that you wanted to believe they were true.

As Michael grew older, I pictured him one day as an Architect. He loved to build. Or perhaps, working for Disney as an Animator. He loved to draw. Maybe he would be an Attorney. Michael could certainly present his case and argue the merits of it. He always had a "twinkle in his eye" and a wonderful laugh that belonged only to him. Michael was loved, truly loved by his family. We wanted so much for him.

Somewhere along the path of life from childhood to young adulthood, Michael's life took a turn...a turn that would redirect him away from his family and towards another direction. That direction would be one that ultimately took him from this world and into another...the world of drug addiction.

Michael left behind journals in which he wrote, "I have a relationship with heroin where I only look forward to getting high. Nothing can describe the feeling when dope hits you. I put dope first, before family, friends and work". Michael continued, "Drugs have been what I use in recreation, before I got to the abuse stage. I can barely recall life before it."

Michael writes that "My problems worsened when I was laid off from my job. My drug use at that time was solidly pot, with some minor alcohol use. I feel that my life problems really began with my heroin use, but this heroin use actually began from my losing my job. I lost my job and I had no means to pay my bills, so I started using heroin to forget about this".

In telling a little about himself Michael said that his favorite drug was heroin and that he had been using it for about 6 years. That would mean that he started in his mid twenties. He said that the reason he used it was because he enjoyed the feeling and it made him forget his worries. His second drug of choice was Herb (Marijuana). He said that he had been using it since he was 16.

In January, 2004 Michael entered a rehab program and graduated from it 6 months later. He went to AA meetings every single night. He worked at his father's office doing computer work. Michael had gained weight, badly needed, and seemed to be doing so well. He fooled everyone, his doctors, his family, his friends, perhaps even himself. But in the end, heroin won in Michael's battle. Michael had written that "I put dope first, before family, friends and work". I don't think that Michael willingly chose drugs over everything else in his life. I truly believe, that despite all the efforts on his part, and the support of everyone around him, that he was powerless against Heroin. Michael died on September 9, 2004. He used in the middle of the night, when he was alone and he died from his body's reaction to the drug. Michael was 31 years old.

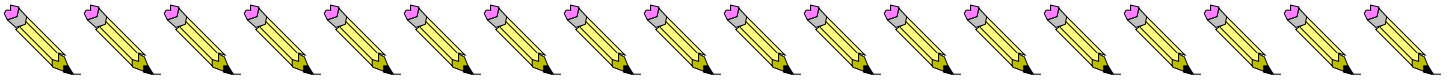
I read and reread Michael's notes and cards. "Dear Mom", Michael writes "Thank You for being there when needed, and giving me space to find things out for myself" Love, Michael. Or, "Mom & Dad, Thank you for all your patience, understanding and love. It's great to be with you on the holidays." Love, Michael.

What are Michael's words telling me? Telling us? Once Michael started using he was hooked and, as hard as he tried, he couldn't escape the fact that he liked, no, he loved, the feeling he got from using.

The only way that we can beat drugs is to never start using them. The only way we can prevent our kids from starting is by doing the best we can to talk with them beginning when they are very young. By the time we really talked about drugs, Michael was already in denial. I am not sure if anything we said, or didn't say, could have changed the path in which Michael's life lead him.

(continued on page 7)

CHAPTER SHARING PAGE



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In Loving Memory of
Daniel Leo Martin
“Danny”

I'd like the memory of me
to be a happy one,
I'd like to leave an afterglow
of smiles when life is done.

I'd like to leave an echo
Whispering softly down the ways,
of happy times and laughing times
and bright and sunny days.

I'd like the tears, of those who
grieve, to dry before the sun
of happy memories that I leave
when life is done.

Your life was love and labor,
Your love for your family true,
You did your best for all of us,
We will always remember you.

(Author Unknown)

(Daniel is the son of Leo & Patricia Martin)

When I was young and in my prime
I drank my beer at the Overtime
When I was older and still the fool
I sat right there on that eagle stool

I don't regret one thing I've done
I've always had me lots of fun
Met some folks along the way
Most of them are my friends today

Now that I have a daughter who will soon turn five
Nothing in this world makes me feel so alive
When she smiles and looks in my eyes
There is no better feeling as you all know guys

So please stand up and get off you're a-s
Raise up your arm and lift up your glass
This toast is for sons and daughters
Moms and dads
Because of them life is not all that bad.

- Billy

(Billy is the son of Jean Smith)

Don't cry because it's over, Smile because it happened.
~Dr. Seuss

(Michael's Story continued)

Yet despite all the challenges faced with Michael, I wouldn't want to envision my life without him in it. And he is in it. Every-day!! Michael lives. I see him when I look in the mirror. He and I have the same eyes. I read his words and remember how much he loved his family. I remember all the funny things he did. My daughters and I share memories of him on trips with us when he was a little boy. Like the time we all traveled in the same car on a trip to Williamsburg, Virginia. Michael had recently been exposed to Chicken Pox and, not only did he come down with the illness, but he shared it with me and his father and his sisters. Picture the 5 of us all covered with Pox at the same time in the same house!

I have three children. Michael is my son and he is with me every day of my life. Michael has a story to tell and I hope, in this article, that I have shared a little bit of what he would like you to know about his life and, in some small way perhaps, Michael's story may help some one else.

Harriet Burak (Michael's mom)

Siblings

What Siblings Think About



Grief Support For Siblings

When a child has died, siblings are often referred to as “the forgotten mourners.” While parents usually receive much support, siblings usually receive little—often being asked “How are your parents doing?” The Compassionate Friends is an organization that is not just for bereaved parents. It’s also for bereaved siblings (and grandparents). Some chapters have sibling subgroups while many welcome adult siblings to their meetings. Contact your local chapter to find out their policies on siblings and their meeting schedules. On The Compassionate Friends national website, www.compassionatefriends.org, you will find support in a number of different ways.:

- 1) [Online Support Community](#) (live chats) allows you to talk with other bereaved siblings from across the country during the Online Support Community sessions held every week. These sessions are limited in number of participants and have trained monitors who are also siblings.
- 2) Recommended sibling materials are offered through [TCF Exclusives](#).
- 3) Two brochures made specifically for bereaved siblings:
[When a Brother or Sister Dies](#)
[Adults Grieving the Death of a Sibling](#)

4) All TCF National Conferences and many regional conferences offer workshops and other activities specifically geared for bereaved siblings.

5) [We Need Not Walk Alone](#), the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends includes stories for siblings as well as the popular sibling column “Ask Dr. Paulson.”

6) TCF chapters that provide sibling support (use [chapter locator](#))

Contact your local chapter for further information.

Siblings Walking Together (Formerly the Sibling Credo)

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.
We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters.
Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.
Sometimes we will need the support of our friends.
At other times we need our families to be there.
Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us,
continuing to become the individuals we want to be.
We cannot be our dead brother or sister;
however, a special part of them lives on with us.
When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed.
We are living a life very different from what we envisioned,
and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak.
Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others
the value of family and the precious gift of life.
Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are,
but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of
The Compassionate Friends.



OUR CHILDREN LOVED AND REMEMBERED

Each season we remember the children who are sadly missed. Please take a few moments, place them in your thoughts, and remember them on their day together with their parents. None of us ever forget our special days and messages that say "I care" help us to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

BIRTHDAYS



OCTOBER

BRANDT BLANEY
BRANDON CHARLES BORROR
SCOTT CONDO
LEANN CORKERY
JASON MICHAEL COSCIA
VALERIE COSTA
AMY COURTNEY
JOHN PAUL JOSEPH DERMADY
JOSHUA BENJAMIN KNOCHIN
DAN LYNCH
ANGEL SPATARO

NOVEMBER

NICOLE BERMAN
MICHELE BRAUN
MATTHEW PHILLIP CHENETTE
MAUREEN GALLAGHER
RICHIE GALLAGHER
JEREMY S. GRIFFIN
NINA KILROY
PHOENIX MACLEOD
DANIEL LEO MARTIN
MATT MCCUE
RICHARD MIRABILE JR.
SHAWN MICHAEL NELSON
JOHN MYRICK
CHRISTOPHER SULLIVAN
BOBBY WEBBER JR.

ANNIVERSARIES



OCTOBER

NICOLE BERMAN
BRANDT BLANEY
RONALD A. CATRAMBONE JR.
BRUCE COHEN
CATHERINE ELISE CROCKER
MICHAEL P. GIORDANO
KEVIN PATRICK O'CONNOR
CHRISTOPHER SMEGLIN
ROGER ALAN SMITH

NOVEMBER

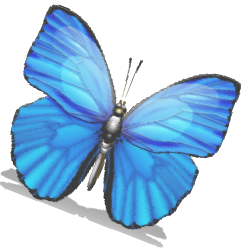
DONNA ADAMS
JASON ADELSBERG
JAMES BLANKENSHIP
ANDREW ALFRED CARLSON
JASON STEVEN KEITH
PETER FREDERICK KERLE
NINA KILROY
BETHANEY LAWTON
DAN LYNCH
LYNN MIRABILE
DAVID ANTHONY MORRISON
SHAWN MICHEAL NELSON
CHRISTOPHER ADAM TAVARES
PAUL A. TERRELONGE JR.
ANDREW (DREW) ROBERT TYRRELL

THE BIRTHDAY TABLE

In the month of your loved ones birthday, please feel free to bring in a picture of your child and place it on the birthday table. You may also bring in anything that has special meaning to you that relates to your child.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched, but are felt in the heart ~
Helen Keller

Please let me know if you find an error or an omission and I will correct it. kennykap13@yahoo.com



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 Michael P. Giordano
William & Lois Giordano

In Loving Memory of Raymond Lysakowski
Kathryn Lysakowski

In loving Memory of Vinnie
Gilda Peruzzi

In Loving Memory of Angus Alexander
Kelly MacDonald

In Loving Memory of Our Son
Boston City Councilor Brian Joseph Honan
We love you Brian Joseph Timothy
Patrick & Mary Honan

In Loving Memory of Angel Spataro
On your birthday and always loved and missed
beyond words.
James, Frances & Alicia Spataro

In Loving Memory of W. Scott Richards
Lynn A. Richards

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 **December** Newsletter must be received by **November, 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.

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

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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