



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

## SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

WINTER 2011

**MEETINGS** at St. Paul's Parish House, 20 Fearing Road, Hingham (across the street from Citizens Bank) at 7:00 PM on First and Third Mondays of the month (including holidays). Also, occasionally, there is a meeting when a month has a 5th Monday.

**CHAPTER PHONE:** 781-749-3401

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:**

The Compassionate Friends  
PO Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522  
Toll-free 877-969-0010

**www.compassionatefriends.org**

**email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.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.

©2007 The Compassionate Friends

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

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all children who have died

# Worldwide Candle Lighting®

... that their light may always shine.

**Sunday, December 11, 2011**  
**7 PM Around the Globe**

The TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting is held every year on the second Sunday in December at 7:00 PM in every time zone. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lighted in the next creating a 24 hour wave of light that encircles the globe. To coincide with the world remembrance, this year our chapter will hold its annual memorial on **Sunday, December 11th. Please note our memorial begins at 6:15 PM. Please arrive on time** to sign in, hang your child's ornament and get settled. It is open to all friends and family. I hope you will take the time during a busy season to join us in remembering all of our children who have gone too soon. As we have done in the past, you are welcome to bring an ornament in you child's memory. Place your child's name on the ornament and your name and phone number if you wish and bring one home in memory of another child. After the candle lighting please join us for light refreshments and if you would like to bring a dessert it would be greatly appreciated.

**Sunday December 11, 2011, 6:15 PM**

**First Parish Church**

**24 River Street, Norwell MA 02061**

(At the intersection of Rte. 123 & River Street just beyond the State Police barracks at Norwell Center)

For more information please call us at 781-749-3401 or e-mail

Martha Berman at mmartha1@comcast.net.

**CHAPTER NEWS: WINTER 2011**


**CHAPTER CO-LEADER:**  
Martha Berman 781-337-8649  
[mmartha1@comcast.net](mailto:mmartha1@comcast.net)


**CHAPTER CO-LEADER:**  
Rob Tyrrell 781-848-9220  
[robtyrrell@comcast.net](mailto:robtyrrell@comcast.net)


**REGIONAL COORDINATOR:**  
Rick Mirabile 781-740-1135  
[rmirabile@comcast.net](mailto:rmirabile@comcast.net)


**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:**  
Brenda Tower 781-925-1235  
[bltower11@verizon.net](mailto:bltower11@verizon.net)


**CHAPTER WEBSITE:**  
Created and maintained by  
Catherine Klier  
[www.tcf-southshore.org](http://www.tcf-southshore.org)


 **Candle Lighting:** The annual Candle Lighting Service will be held on Sunday, December 11 at 6:15 PM. This year the Christmas tree will be donated by Angie & Barry Hayes in memory of their son, Brian. You are welcome to bring in an ornament with your child's name on it. It can have a theme such as a sport or activity your child was interested in or something he or she was fond of. When you arrive, hang it on our tree and at the end of the service take home another child's ornament. One more way we get to know each others children.

 **Meeting Time Reminder:** Just a reminder that our meetings now start at 7:00 PM and end at 8:30 PM. We encourage you to arrive 15 to 20 minutes early to look through our books and talk with other parents and siblings.

 **Chapter Library:** Our chapter maintains a library of books for bereaved parents and siblings. If you have borrowed a book we ask that you please remember to return it so another parent can use it. If you would like to keep a book you have borrowed just tell Martha so we can replace it.

 **Birthday Table:** When a meeting falls on or near your child's birthday you may want to bring in some photos and/or a favorite snack or treat that your child liked. Share a story or a memory with the group. It is a wonderful way for us to get to know your son or daughter, sister or brother.

 **35th National Conference July 2012:** The Compassionate Friends/USA, in conjunction with the 35th National Conference, will also be hosting The Compassionate Friends 5th International Gathering. The combined conference will be held July 20-22, 2012 in Costa Mesa, California. For more details go the TCF national website [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org).


 **Articles & Poems:** If you wish to submit an *original* poem or article for consideration in a future newsletter, please send it via e-mail to Brenda Tower at [bltower11@verizon.net](mailto:bltower11@verizon.net) or Martha Berman at [mmartha1@comcast.net](mailto:mmartha1@comcast.net). Word or PDF formats only please.

**PHONE FRIENDS**

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

Rick Mirabile	781-740-1135
Martha Berman	781-337-8649
Brenda Tower	781-925-1235
Trudy Cole-Sevier	781-837-3171
Taren Whitman [siblings]	781-626-2991

[tarenwhitman@comcast.net](mailto:tarenwhitman@comcast.net)



**MEETING CALENDAR**

**DECEMBER:** Monday, December 05 at 7:00 PM  
Monday, December 19 at 7:00 PM

**JANUARY:** Monday, January 02 at 7:00 PM  
Monday, January 16 at 7:00 PM  
Monday, January 30 at 7:00 PM

**FEBRUARY:** Monday, February 06 at 7:00 PM  
Monday, February 20 at 7:00 PM

**\*\* Meetings begin at 7:00 PM and end at 8:30 PM**

## FROM THE EDITOR

As Christmas nears and I brace myself for the long cold winter ahead I remind myself that Christmas was my son, John's favorite holiday and that winter sports were among his most enjoyed. Growing up on the south shore John and his two brothers skated on the local ponds and cranberry bogs, played hockey from the time they were squirts, all through high school and beyond. Some of our best times together were sledding under the light of a full moon with our golden retriever, Jessie, racing up and down the hills beside our sleds and snow tubes. All the boys skied or snowboarded, even going as far away as British Columbia to heli-ski. Winter brings memories of warm family Christmases, energetic boys dressed and ready for a snowball fight at the fall of the first snowflake, frozen toes and ruddy faces, the fresh clean smell of skin and hair, the innocent abandonment of care as they fell asleep. My beautiful boys..... I cannot think of one without the others. They were so close, so connected. It's as if they were, at times, one entity. I know what losing John has done to me, how it has changed me in so many ways. I know the pain I feel and will always feel. But I don't know what Todd and Dave feel. Not really. I know their pain is as deep as mine but I also know it's different. They lost their brother, their best friend and their mentor. And I know that, like my pain, theirs will never go away. But I have learned so much from them about gratitude and about remembering the past with joy. I have watched them bear this sorrow with courage and grace and humility. I know that because of John, the big brother they loved and admired and respected, each of them is a better man, a better father, a better brother, a better son, a better husband and a better human being. That is the example John set.

It's been almost four and a half years since we lost John. I think of him a hundred times a day. I think of his brothers and his children and my heart breaks a little more each time. But, unlike the parents and brothers and sisters for whom this is the first Christmas without their precious child or sibling, the edges are not so sharp, the wound is not so raw. I don't replay that awful day over and over in my mind the way I did at first. I have my other boys, my grandchildren. They are everything to me. They need me to be present in their lives and so I am because I want to be and I love more deeply than I ever did before.

This Christmas and in the coming year my hope for every bereaved parent, grandparent, brother and sister is that we can summon the memories that bring us warmth and gladness, fill our hearts with joy and love and make us smile so big our faces ache. I wish each and every one of us to remember our children and celebrate the gift of their lives with us..... even if it's just for today. Surely we can do for one day that which seems impossible for a lifetime.

Peace,

Brenda



### Wintersong

Season of light, season of love and peace,  
Season of shadow, season of memories,  
Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears.

Give us the courage to laugh again.  
Give us the vision to hope again.  
Give us the power to love again-  
For all our new seasons  
And for all our new years.



~Sascha

### Like a Tree in Winter

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves,  
We look ahead to spring for the new growth and  
The warmth of the sun to heal the pain in our hearts.

Let us Make January a time to reach out  
To each other and give that warmth from our hearts,  
And in return, we will show new growth.



Pat Dodge-TCF Sacramento Valley

## OUR CHILDREN 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 get through them. Our Children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.*

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

*Jeffrey William Currie  
Rodney E. Andrews Jr.  
John Michael Hoppe  
Ted Keane Cochran  
Nancy Ann Farrar-Hood  
Richard "Ricky" Hoffman  
Anthony "Terry" Curran  
John J. Ho Sang  
Nicholas Alexander  
Evan K. Martin  
Andrew Alfred Carlson  
Joe Doyle  
Joy Marie Hanlon  
Andrew "Drew" Robert Tyrrell  
Matthew Thomas Simpson  
Kyle Lee Dooner  
Timothy Lee Hannan  
Herbert L. "Royce" Whitaker IV  
Jason Adelsberg  
Roger Alan Smith  
Natalie Nevaeh Coble*



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

*Albert P. Cassino Jr.  
Kory Ambler  
Elizabeth Taylor Kulikowski  
Christy Marie Proctor  
Eric Myles Berger  
Angus Alexander MacDonald  
Alan Howard Freedman  
Edward Neal Lappen  
Michael Jonathan Burak  
Christopher Smeglin  
Larry Thornton  
Adam James Wade  
Jordan Dale Cibley  
Kimberly Ann Rojas  
Bruce Cohen  
Phillip Brennan Dowd  
Alfred Gomez  
Matthew Edward Clancy  
Clifton Durand  
Guy V. Schipellite  
Michael Borrelli*



### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

*Albert P. Cassino Jr.  
Tommy Camejo  
Mark T. Burns  
Rodney E. Andrews Jr.  
Glenn Collin Standifer  
Joanne Myrick  
Eric Myles Berger  
Jeffrey Ross Caldas  
Bo Craig Falco  
Garrett J. Lysakowski  
Eric Paul Burgoyne  
David F. Terrio  
William "Bill: Foronjy  
Frank LoConte  
William James Falco  
Shaun McCarty  
Kory Ambler  
Timothy Lee Hannan  
Matthew Edward Clancy  
Edward Neal Lappen  
Aimee Leigh Bullard*

### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

*Christopher McGovern  
Brian Patrick Regan Jr.  
Larry Thornton  
Jason Andrew Wagner  
Kimberly Ann Rojas  
Robert Antonio Castro  
Lex Rothman  
Willem Adair Berkelaar  
William Joseph "Joe" Baker  
John Anthony Leary  
CJ Garber  
Matthew John Steuterman  
Scott Condo  
Jeremy Griffin*

Your heart will mend but it will....  
Be a different heart  
Wearing a deep and lasting scar  
Be a more compassionate heart  
Know life in a different way  
Understand the eternity of Love.

Nancy Green—TCF Livonia, MI

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

*Gabe Shanok*  
*Brendan Patrick Wolfe*  
*Denise Ann Vasconcellos*  
*Dean Alexander Hannan*  
*Craig Joseph Miller*  
*Ryan Matthew MacVicar Hannan*  
*William F. Dunn Jr.*  
*Kelly Marie O'Brien*  
*Scott Thomas St.Pierre*



### Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love...without measure...fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you...for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved and treasured before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me... still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, somehow, we would survive and build on the ashes of our broken hearts. Building somehow in spite of our pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten.

What a bitter lesson! And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart...and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in our fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow.

We were blessed to have held you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely alone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And though I would trade blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

Lisa Sculley ~ TCF, Jacksonville, Orange Park Chapter

## FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

*Mark Edward Lucius*  
*Denise Ann Vascincellos*  
*Natalie Nevaeh Coble*  
*Clifton Durand*  
*Philip Arthur Cheserone*  
*Joshua Gabriel Rowan*  
*Dean Alexander Hannan*  
*Lindsay K. Pellegrino*  
*Jacob J. Orchard*  
*Jasper Christopher Johnson*  
*Elizabeth Redden Deutsche*  
*John Myrick*

Dear all,

I apologize for any mistakes, omissions or misspellings and if you let me know I will correct them in the next newsletter.

Thank you,  
Brenda



### He is gone

You can shed tears that he is gone  
Or you can smile because he has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that he will come  
back

Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him  
Or you can be full of the love that you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember him and only that he is gone  
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn  
your back

Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your  
eyes, love and go on



~David Harkins

## Did I Love Him Enough?

I hope I did. It's sad that now I'm only able to look back and hope I did. There are no do-overs.

There are no, "I'm sorrrys". There are no thoughts of "I'll do better next time" or "I'll spend more time with him today." The lesson I've learned is so valuable but it's a lesson you only learn when you lose a child. Oh, I wish I could tell him that it was OK that he lined his shoes against the entire wall of his bedroom when I sent him in there to clean his closet. In fact I should have said it was ingenious or adorable or maybe commented on how long it must have taken him to do this. Any of these things would have been better than the way it actually played out. I can't remember the exact words but I can remember the disappointment in his eyes. Oh, how I wish I could do this over. This is one of the guilts I can never undo. I can only whisper "I'm sorry, Rick" and hope he hears.

When he had fever and came and sat next to me to chase away the fever-induced villains, did I hug him or re-assure him that I would always be there to care for and protect him?

Or did I continue to watch my soap opera knowing that this episode would never be shown again but they would continue with the next chapter of the story tomorrow? I wish I had realized then that life is the same. The words I spoke or the indifference I showed would be forever held in that slot of history. We are human and we tend to have a selfish side. A side of us that also wants what we want. However, when we have children that side is usually put up on a shelf to be taken out and dusted off and appreciated in the days after our children leave to begin their own lives. When it is brought down earlier we might use those times as learning experiences – teaching our child to share or to realize that as parents we have wants and needs also but then we put this selfish side back on the shelf to be enjoyed later. When the child leaves a parent has time to reflect and distinguish

between our good memories and our bad. "Others" who haven't lost their children for good, the ones whose children are just away at college or starting a family of their own have a priceless opportunity to correct any wrongs that haunt them. The wrongs are slight in the eyes of many and would be in my eyes if my son were alive. But what could have been learning experiences are now my nightmares. I could say that those episodes were a part of life. I might even pride myself on my accomplishments as a parent, given myself credit for his wonderful outcome. What do I credit myself for now? That he didn't live? That it didn't turn out the way I had planned when he was born? Do I give myself credit for any of the good things I did? No, I can't remember many. What stands out in my mind are regrets, the things I wish I could do-over. If only I would have known that each day was a blessing. Each minute was priceless. Each smile was a gift from heaven.

Each tooth lost was a step toward adulthood and ever closer to the orthodontist's office.

I can only hope that he hears me and believes me when I say, "I'm sorry, Rick" and I can only hope that he knew how much I loved him because there are no do-overs in my life regarding my son. I asked myself daily, "Did I Love Him enough?"

Dana Rogers—TCF Galveston, TX  
In Memory of my son, Rick Rogers 4-12-81/2-3-05



## FOR SIBLINGS

On Chocolate and Grief  
In memory of Evan Knight Martin

Mid October last, I sighed and pouted at my partner, Trevor, saying “Something feels off today. I don’t know why, but I just feel like I should be at home.” We were in Los Angeles for an event with his extended family, and we had arrived a couple of days early to explore, filling our days with food, window shopping, long walks in beautiful places, and (of course) chocolate tasting. But during those days, I often felt out-of-sorts. I had trouble focusing on what we were doing and woke up from sleep feeling unrested. It was only later that I wondered if what I felt was actually a sense of foreboding.

October 16, 2010, began as a day of celebration. We shared a delicious lunch with Trevor’s parents, stopped by a chocolate shop and chatted with the chocolatier and staff, then joined his family at the event. At one point, I joked with Trevor and had the sudden thought that the joke sounded exactly like something my brother might have said. I chuckled to myself, as I often have, at the recognition of our similar sense of humor.

Afterwards, Trevor and I piled into our rental car to head to the second location of the evening. We shared a few of the truffles we had picked up that afternoon. Just as we were about to drive off, a cell phone rang — my father was calling. I answered, and he said in a voice filled with emotion, “Hey Carla, it’s your dad. Are you somewhere where you can sit down and talk? I’ve got some really bad news for you.” As he spoke, telling me that my brother, Evan, had died only hours before, my breath quickened, and then I held it, I don’t know for how long.

Evan was twenty-five years old and his heart had stopped, immediately and without warning. Just like that, he was gone. Within a matter of hours, Trevor spirited us back to Boston, and then we jumped into action to notify our friends and family of the loss. The next several days were among the most emotionally powerful that I have ever experienced. For two weeks, we woke early in the morning and drove to my parents’ home, then spent the day hosting an endless stream of bereaved guests, planning the wake and funeral, writing the obituary and eulogies, scanning hundreds of photos, answering phone calls, texts, and emails, trying to make some sense of the new world. We were in shock; our emotions went up and down like a rollercoaster ride. But even when I think back on the darkest moments of those weeks, I remember the almost euphoric, peaceful feeling brought on by the kindness displayed by others to our family. I smile when I recall the image of my mother’s best friend bursting through the kitchen door, her face contorted with worry. She held a giant Ghirardelli dark chocolate bar out in front of her — an offering. “I couldn’t think of anything else worth eating in this situation,” she said, wrapping us up in her arms.

At the end of those long days filled with tears and laughter, Trevor would drive us home to our apartment in the city. The lights along the ocean twinkled in the dark blue night, and I would breathe deeply for the first time in hours as we crested the exit ramp from I93 to I90, flying high above the city for a few special seconds. I spent the rest of the ride doubled over in grief stricken agony, silently sobbing as the reality of the loss began to hit me.

My brother was a remarkable person. Though he was technically my \*baby brother-little brother-three and a half years younger than me, so I used to babysit him and boss him around brother,\* as we both got older, the age difference melted away. He excelled at brotherly activities, whispered tongue-in-cheek threats to my boyfriends over the years, helped me to find and buy my first (used) car, then took it upon himself to give it regular thorough inspections and tune ups. We shared many things, including a sweet tooth. Starting at a young age, he snuck and hoarded the chocolate treats that he knew I loved and that our parents mostly forbid, getting as much pleasure from sharing them with me as he did from eating them himself.

For my part, I was thoroughly smitten with sisterly brother-hero worship. I loved doing Evan impressions for my friends, acting out his latest hilarious stories and antics, insisting that it was just a matter of time until he would be discovered and make a splash as a TV personality. “You have a car? You have to take it to my brother. His hands are magical. He can fix absolutely anything. He is a genius — a car whisperer!” I would boast. We spoke regularly, texted often, traveled together, offered one another advice on life and love, and dreamed out loud always. He was, in so many ways, my closest and oldest friend.

### Editor’s Note:

To continue reading Carla’s wonderful story celebrating her brother Evan, Please click on the link below.

<http://bittersweetnotes.com/category/chocolate-and-grief>



## Holding Hands

No one held my hand as I held yours. My tears formed silently in solitude, flowing openly only when you were asleep. We sat alone and counted down your life.

Neither your love nor mine could save you. I could offer only my arms full of love as I held your frail body, my sweet child.

Others sent candies and pretty flowers but you could no longer swallow the yummy treats. Our love tried so hard to hold you to this earth.

As we clasped hands, we sadly walked together. We ventured down that long tunnel of light.

I went as long as it took for you to adjust. And when you felt safe in the glorious light, you then released my rigid grip and let me go back.

Leaving me with only your heart in my empty hand.

Mary Jane Cronin  
Bereavement Magazine June 1999  
Reprinted with permission



## Chanukah

At this season of life, we remember the light you brought into our lives:  
The light of your laughter  
The light of your wit and intelligence  
The light of your love  
May the time not be distant when the memory of these lights will illumine our hearts and minds and eradicate the darkness therein.

Stephanie Hesse  
TCF Rockland County NY  
TCF North Palm Beach County FL

## And if I go while you're still here....

And if I go while you're still here...  
Know that I still live on  
vibrating to a different measure  
behind a thin veil you cannot see through.  
You will not see me  
so you must have faith.  
I await the time when we can soar together again,  
both aware of each other.  
Until then, live your life to the fullest.  
And when you need me,  
Just whisper my name in your heart,  
I will be there.

Colleen Hitchcock



"The most important gift you can give your children at this time is the feeling that life continues despite pain. Death, 'the loss of innocence,' can either land you at the edge of the abyss and threaten your existence with meaninglessness and futility, or you will start to build the bridge that spans the chasm with things of life that still count - memory, family, friendship and love."

Rabbi Earl Grollman



Steven Horn, Age 10  
TCF—Hinesdale, KY

## Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue—a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations.

By "dropping out" we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season. Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to "go with the flow" of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality. We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

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



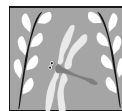
*Sorrow makes us all children again—destroys all differences of intellect. The wisest know nothing.~*

Ralph Waldo Emerson



## What is New About This New Year?

...As we continue with the struggle to cope with the loss of our child...In this New Year let's also find ways to be close to the family that we have left. We feel regrets about hugs not given, letters not written, "I love you's" not said often enough. But we can do all of these things now. We can establish new memories with the family we have right now....



Dory Rooker  
TCF—Upper Valley, VT

LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a living memorial to our child. Usually given on anniversaries, holidays, etc. but any contributions would be welcome at any time. Since there is no charge for newsletters and meetings, we solely depend on donations to purchase books, brochures and keep the chapter running. They are tax deductible. 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 Martha Berman (781)337-8649 or E-mail [mmartha1@comcast.net](mailto:mmartha1@comcast.net)

**In Memory of:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Messages:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
The Compassionate Friends  
147 North Street  
Hingham, MA 02043

**Coping with the Holidays**

**Be kind to yourself:** Give yourself permission not to live up to other people's expectations. It's OK to say no to invitations. Do only as much as you can comfortably manage. Choose what is best for you, whether it is to be with people or to spend time alone.

**Ask for what you need:** People want to help, but unless you tell them how they can, they may remain distant out of concern that they will upset you.

**Create support for yourself:** The surest road through grief is to experience it, not deny it. Sharing your pain and loss eases it. Try to find people in your life who can hear your pain and are willing to listen to you.

**Acknowledge that this year will be different:** You may choose to keep your holiday traditions intact and celebrate as usual, or avoid celebrating the holiday altogether. Or, you might want to create some ritual that would be meaningful to you and would honor your loved one.

**Try not to feel guilty for laughing or crying:** Whatever feelings you have during this time of year, accept them.



NEWSLETTER RENEWAL

We want all who find this newsletter helpful to receive it. Printing and mailing it represents one of the major expenses of our chapter.

An e-mail version saves paper and chapter dollars and we encourage all to take advantage. If you find it useful, please consider a donation to defray the cost. It is not required but would be greatly appreciated.

**If you wish to continue to be on the mailing list, please take a moment to fill this out and mail it or e-mail me a message along with your preferred method of delivery.**

Since this is your newsletter I would appreciate any suggestions you might have to improve it. Also, if you have any poems, suggestions or reflections you would like to share with other bereaved parents, please send them to me for consideration in future newsletters.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Would you like to continue to receive the newsletter?**

**Yes** \_\_\_\_\_

**No** \_\_\_\_\_

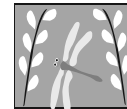
**As E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **USPS** \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to:**

**The Compassionate Friends  
147 North Street  
Hingham, MA 02043**

**Editor's E-mail:** [bltower11@verizon.net](mailto:bltower11@verizon.net)



**SUPPORT FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN DIED BY SUICIDE**

**Trudy Cole-Sevier**, who is an active member of SS Chapter of TCF, is also a facilitator for a **SAMARITANS** support group that meets at Quincy Medical Center, 114 Whitwell Street, Quincy MA every 2nd and 4th Thursday from 7 to 9 pm.

Trudy may be reached at 781-837-3171 or e-mail her at: [tcolesev@verizon.net](mailto:tcolesev@verizon.net).

*We thank the following individuals for their Support. It is deeply appreciated.*

Noreen Curtis  
In loving memory of my son **Gregory Curtis**  
My precious Gregory you live forever in my heart. I love you.  
Mom

Eleanor Burns and family  
In loving memory of our son and brother **Mark T. Burns**  
You are in our thoughts and prayers daily.  
Mom, Lyn, Brendan & Colman

Mary Ann Eckhardt and family  
In loving memory of our son and brother **Shaun McCarty**  
We love you. We think about you all the time.  
Mom and your sisters Cara McCarty and Cosima Zehring

To the Walsh family  
In loving memory of **Phoebe Isabelle Walsh**  
You continue to be in our hearts and prayers.  
Your friends in Home Support at Linden Ponds

Barbara Curtin  
In loving memory of **James Blankenship**

Marita Orlandino  
In loving memory of my son **Marc Jude Orlandino**  
Marc, we love and miss you.

Patrick & Mary Honan  
In memory of our son **Brian Joseph Honan**  
It doesn't get easier. We miss you so much.

Paula McDonald  
In loving memory of her son **Richie Gallagher** and her daughter **Maureen Gallagher**, Paula has donated the candles for the Candle Lighting Service.  
"And we will light a candle for you."



### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

*Ashley & Eric Critchley parents of Tucker Joseph Critchley*

*Laura McLaughlin sister of Scott Thomas St. Pierre*

*Elly St. Pierre mother of Scott Thomas St. Pierre*

*Joan Dowd mother of Phillip Brennan Dowd*

*Sandy Coady mother of Davis Joseph Coady*

*Laura Mason mother of Michael Borrelli*

*Andrea Borrelli sister of Michael Borrelli*

*Barbara Gaffney mother of Jebediah Gaffney*

### A Season's Grief

Trim the tree with tears, if you must  
Admire their sparkle, but do not let them  
Quench the flames on the candles you lit.

Unwrap them,  
Peel away the obscuring layers  
And reveal the treasure within;  
My love for you is sturdy and durable.  
You may wear it for any occasion  
And share it with others.  
Give me the only gift you can-  
Remember me.

Remember me as I was. Do not try  
To make me better or smarter or prettier  
Or in any way something other than  
The person I was.  
Keep me alive in your heart.

Rob Holmes

*I can release the pain that touches my memories  
but only if I remember them.  
I can release my grief but only if I express it.  
Memories and grief must have a heart to hold them.*

Alan D. Wolfert

*"Reckless words pierce like a sword but the tongue of the wise brings healing."*

Proverbs 12:18



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

***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”.*