



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

***SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS
SPRING 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

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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In the Morning

From wherever you are you smile at me.

"Find life for both of us," you say.

"Find peace for both of us," you say.

"Find strength and love and hope for both of us," because you are my mother

- Sascha

CHAPTER BUSINESS

I am honored to announce that I have accepted the position of Newsletter Editor for our Chapter. In addition, we are very pleased to welcome our new Newsletter Staff, Therese Larrabee (newsletter formatting) whose son, Brian, passed in 2004 at age 18, Judy Leary, mother of John, who passed in 2007 at age 31 and Deb Bullard whose daughter Aimee, passed in 2007 at age 30. My own son, John, passed in 2007, at age 42.

-- Brenda Tower

WRITINGS

The newsletter is for you and if you have written something you would like to share please send it to the editor and it will be considered for publication. The same is true if you read something that you find helpful, but we must respect copyright laws and only publish with permission. Also, if you have suggestions as to how the newsletter might be improved we would love to hear them.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This year's conference will be held in Arlington, Virginia on July 2-4. Information is available on the National TCF website, including registration forms. We encourage early hotel reservations, as special room rates are limited. Please call if you have any questions.

PHONE FRIENDS

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

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Trudy Cole-Sevier 781-837-3171

Janet Lawton 781-871-6182

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LAC65@peoplepc.com

FROM THE EDITOR

Here we are in a new year, indeed a new decade. Winter is waning and Spring is approaching. What does that mean to us? For some, it will be the first year without their beloved child – a first Valentine's Day, a first February school vacation, a first Easter, a first Passover, a first Mother's Day. For most of us, it will be yet another holiday to observe or not observe. We have come to define everything in terms of “before” and “after”. Many holidays can be a cruel reminder of the way life used to be and we will “get through” them the same way we got through every other day – one breath at a time. If we are fortunate enough to have surviving children we will have the comfort of them and that can go a long way toward helping us maintain any traditions. But it is still a struggle and it takes courage. For the parents who have lost their only child or children; the child who has lost their only sibling; they may ask, “am I still a mother, a father, a sister, a brother?” Of course, the answer is “yes”. Always and forever.

We have all suffered the worst loss. We have experienced pain beyond anything we've ever been called upon to endure, more than we ever believed could exist. Unbearable, yet somehow we do bear it. As the protective cocoon of shock in the first year begins to fall away we are increasingly aware of the depth of our grief. Most of us in TCF have found that turning to each other helps us on this life journey. By listening to someone else share their story, we can transcend our own pain, if only for a few moments at a time, and offer true compassion and understanding to a parent or a sibling who is hurting as much as we are.

I have heard so many people say “TCF saved my life” and for me, that is true and cannot be overstated. TCF taught me that I do not have to be consumed by my grief, I do not have to let it become who I am and there are things I can do, ways I can help another grief-stricken parent to honor their child by continuing to live and love in their memory.

It does not get easier, we get stronger and we do it together because we need not walk alone.

Some thoughts about the candle lighting:

This past December's Candle Lighting Service was a beautiful tribute to our children who have died and a testament to the love in our hearts. As each one of our children's names was called and another candle was lit, the church glowed with a light that, in my mind, can best be described as “holy”. It was a powerfully spiritual experience as so many felt the collective presence of all our beloved children, grandchildren, brothers and sisters.

We would like to sincerely thank all who contributed their time, effort and talent to make this glorious and memorable tribute possible. It was a poignant example of how The Compassionate Friends is so very much more than the sum of its parts.

Brenda Tower

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.

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FINDING SPRING AGAIN

It is the end of February, which means we are nearing the end of what has often been a brutal winter. While gazing at the mountains of snow piled high in my front yard and the foot-long icicles hanging from my roof, it is hard to imagine that spring will ever come. We have endured bitter cold winds that have chilled us to the bone and treacherous roads that we have cautiously traveled. The days have been long and dark and often free of sunlight. No matter how long you have been a native of the Upper Midwest, I know we all will be glad when it comes to an end.

However, as I described these thoughts about winter, I felt as if I was describing the days of my early grief. At that point, I did not believe that a day would ever come when I would thaw from the chill that had overtaken my body and mind. The bleakness of my existence during those early months after Nina died is almost frightening to remember; it is so difficult to even conceive of that much pain. I was anesthetized from some of its cruelty by the protective blanket of numbness that blessedly shielded me from the gale force of such overpowering sorrow. How could I ever feel spring in my heart again?

Spring had always been my favorite season. The air had a certain freshness to it that I would drink in. Simply put, it always made me feel happy and light of heart. Spring was our reward for surviving the freezing winter months that preceded it. It brought a smile to my face and a bounce to my step.

However, it was the Spring of the year where my heart was irretrievably broken. It was during this exquisite season of warm, lilac-scented breezes and sun-kissed mornings where my sweet daughter Nina's life would end.

I wondered if my thoughts about Spring would ever be the same. Rather than anticipate with gladness the coming of the spring, I dreaded it with the knowledge that it contained the anniversary of her death. The smell of the air and the look to the sky that I once found exhilarating now brought me back to my darkest day. I know that anyone, who has lost a loved one to death, no matter the season, understands.

Will Spring come again to your life? In the almost six years since Nina died, has it come to mine? Looking back at my description of the winter of "my early grief", I know that I have come a long way from that time of desolation. I have found, especially after the first two years, that with each subsequent Spring, I have rediscovered some of the pleasure I used to feel. I have learned that just because I have found things to feel joyful about again; it doesn't mean I am dishonoring my daughter's memory. I now take her along with me in my mind and my heart. I try to retrieve memories of the dandelion bouquets she so carefully gathered and presented to me, the rides to the park in the Radio Flyer, our talks while sunning on the deck, and, of course, shopping for Spring clothes! Her favorite pastime! I will always feel tenseness, apprehension and sadness as May 11th draws near, but I no longer hold it against Spring.

It is a slow, difficult journey, this grief pathway we travel. It is as treacherous as the roads we maneuvered following the winter storms, never knowing when we will hit an icy patch on the road and be thrown into a tailspin. Yet, we must travel it if we are to find any measure of peace and healing.

Please be patient with yourself as you are working hard to survive this winter in your heart. Trust that Spring, though a much different one than the one we knew before our beloved child died, will come again.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul MN

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 to get through them. Our children's lives will go on, as long as we remember them and celebrate their lives.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

*Dean Alexander Hannan
John Buonocore III
Avery Weitbrecht Crompton
Ryan Matthew MacVicar Hannan
William F Dunn Jr*

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

*Stephen Harris
Debra Alexis Davis
Christopher Michael Mulligan
Lynn Mirabile
John Stephen Pearson
James Ferreira
Kathleen Delorey
Mark Shinney
Donna Adams Cholewinski
Marc Jude Orlandino
James Blankenship*

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

*Jonathan Taylor
Brian Joseph Honan
Philip Nisula
Frank LoConte Balcom
Peter Frederick Kerle
Jean E Whitaker
Beth McVeigh
Glenn Collin Standifer
Catherine Elise Crocker
Taylor Bates Johnson
William Joseph Baker
David Anthony Morrison
Robert Joseph Caputo
Tonya Marie Barnes
Melissa Lee Leminen
David Robert Ware Jr
Glen Sherrif
Paul Frances Burns
Christopher Joseph Sweeney*

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

*Mark Edward Lucius
Clifton Durand
Philip Nisula
Joshua Gabriel Rowan
Dean Alexander Hannan
Lindsay K Pellegrino
Jacob J Orchard
Avery Weitbrecht Crompton
Elizabeth Redden Deutsche
John Myrick*

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

*Lindsay Curtin
Nancy Ann Farrar-Hood
Steven Harris
Sean Michael Ewas
Ryan W Carmichael
Michele Braun
Ryan Matthew MacVicar Hannan
Robert Bowker Kelly
Beth McVeigh
Joe Doyle
Nancy Andreasen
Angus Alexander MacDonald
Michael Joseph Marmo*

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

*Liam O'Donnelly
George Joseph Rull
Tracy Harriette Davidson
Leann Corkery
William Smith
Brian Hayes
Phoenix MacLeod
John J Ho Sang
Guy V Schipellite
Brendan Teague MacDonald
Laura Marie Fusco-Fazio
Justin Scott Langham
Donna Marie Carey*

(Continued on page 5)

MAY BIRTHDAYS

*Michael Piccarini
Grant Dean Lynch
Michael Joseph Marmo
Donna Marie Carey
Brian MacIver
Tracy Harriette Davidson
Ryan W Carmichael
George Joseph Rull
Steven Dennis Burke Jr
James Anthony Conry
Bethaney Lawton
Andrew Duhaime*

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

*W Scott Richards
James Ferreira
Richard Mirabile Jr
David Robert Ware Jr
Alan Howard Freedman
Melissa Lee Leminen
Daniel J Maloney
Jordan Dale Cibley
John W Terrio
Amy Courtney
Christopher Sullivan
Jeffery Charles Stevenson
Alfred Gomez
Andrew Pierce Wells
Gregory Curtis
Joseph Ferreira*

To The Newly Bereaved

As the years pass, we see new members come into the chapter, and we try to help them with their grief as we progress in our own. Over and over again I have seen newly bereaved parents come to their first meeting totally devastated and convinced that their lives are over. Through the months (and years) I have seen them struggle and suffer and try to find meaning in their lives again. And they do! Through all the anger, pain and tears, somehow the human spirit is able to survive and flower again in a new life – perhaps a changed life and possibly a sadder one, but a stronger one nevertheless.

We feel so weak and crushed when our beloved children die, but I know – because I have seen it countless times in the years I've been involved with The Compassionate Friends – that we can make it together. When you walked through the door for the first meeting, you were frightened and nervous; but with that step you made a statement about your life. With that first step through the door, you said you wanted to try, you wanted to find a reason for living again, that you weren't willing to be swallowed by your grief. You wanted to go forward, and those first steps into The Compassionate Friends began our journey.

The journey will be a long one, for you loved your child with all your heart and soul. When that child died, a part of you was ripped away. It takes a long time to repair that large hole. The journey will not always be steady or constant; there will be many setbacks. Those of us who have taken the journey before you can assure you that, while there may be no rainbow at the other end, there is indeed “light at the end of the tunnel”. We want to help you as we were helped, but in the beginning and in the long run, you must help yourself. You have to want to get better, to talk about your loss, to struggle through the grief. We will listen, suggest, share and laugh and cry with you; and we hope, at this time next year, you'll be several steps along in your personal journey through grief. Then you can begin to help others.

Karen Schendel, TCF, Houston, Texas

SPRING'S TEARS

When the sun's sharp brilliance echoes in the luminescent blue
A grim, oppressive darkness stabs my aching heart anew.
Its golden glow upon my face, the warmth of winter's sun
Holds the promise of renewal when the icy months are done.

It is this vow of nature's resurgence in the Spring
That bows my head, and breaks my heart; unlocks my suffering.
For you will miss again the beauty of this time of year
The growing warmth, the sunny days when life will reappear.

For nature has no power over death that holds you still,
And though I know, I still resent Spring's early daffodil.
Oh, would that I could speak to Mother Nature face to face!
To beg she work her magic on your lonely resting place.

Why can't it be YOUR rebirth when the gray, cold days are
done?
Why mightn't YOU not live again to see Spring's fresh new dawn
and feel the warmth of sunshine
relish in the greening earth...
to open arms, embracing life
why can't it be YOUR birth?

You were so young, your life so new when death crept in the
door,
And in my grief, beloved child, I'll ask forever more
The reason why the earth's renewed when spring comes 'round
each year
Yet in your grave you're silent still,
and I
condemned
am here.

*By Sally Migliaccio, TCF, Babylon NY
remembering Tracy, always*

Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past... gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the fifth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my Dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued.

The choice to embrace or ignore Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow". Some of us weep. Some of us work. Some of us read. Some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

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

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 email version saves paper and chapter dollars and we encourage all to take advantage.

If you wish to continue to be on the mailing list, please take a moment to fill this out and mail it or email me a message. If you find it useful please consider a donation to defray the cost. It is not required but would be greatly appreciated.

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.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Would you like to continue to receive the newsletter?

Yes _____

No _____

As E-mail _____

Donation enclosed \$ _____

Please mail to:

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

Editor's E-mail: johnboy81164@yahoo.com

"In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God." -

Hamilton's 1937 Aeschylus paraphrased by Robert F Kennedy in a speech on the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1968

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

In Memory Of:

Dates: _____

Message: _____

From: _____

Address: _____

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

It was brought to my attention that in the last newsletter

Anthony (Terry) Curran was listed as the son of *K.T. Leary*. The correct information is:

Erin Leary is the daughter of *K.T. Leary*.

Also, **Anthony (Terry) Curran** is the son of *Anita Curran* whose name was omitted.

We apologize to both families. Please let me know if you find future errors or omissions and I will correct them in the next newsletter. Thank you. - Brenda

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Pat and Bill Hoffman , parents of Richard "Ricky" Hoffman
Karen McBrine, mother of Shane Elizabeth McBrine
Marcia Garber, mother of C J Garber
Leo Marino, father of Marc James Marino
Mary Lou Nichols, mother of Michael Nichols

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

*Rochelle and Aaron Cohen, in loving memory of **Bruce Cohen**, "It has been 19 years and we think of you every moment." ,Love Mom and Dad*

*Amy Moore and Andrew Davidson, in loving memory of **Tracy Harriette Davidson**, "We love you and miss you so much, especially at this time of year, beloved daughter and sister."*

*Geno and Dianne Duhaime, in loving memory of **Andrew Duhaime**, "Always in our hearts, love you forever." , Dad and Dianne*

*Jan Piccarini, in loving memory of **Mike Piccarini**, "We begin another long year without you, but our love for you never diminishes." Love Mom and Dani*

*Faye Balcom, in loving memory of **Frank LoConte** - "Always in my heart, my love to you my son, Ma"*

*Judy and Ed Freedman, in loving memory of our beloved son, **Alan H Freedman**. "We miss you", Mom and Dad*

*Susan Whitaker-Dailey, in loving memory of **Jean Whitaker**, "Birthday blessings for my sister."*

*The Murtagh Family, in loving memory of **Christopher Smeglin**, "for a wonderful nephew, cousin and friend. We miss you so much."*

*Gilda Peruzzi, in loving memory of **Vinnie Peuzzi**.*

*Steven and K Langham, in loving memory of **Justin Scott Langham**, "forever in our hearts and loved."*

**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”*