



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

SOUTH SHORE CHAPTER HINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

WINTER 2010

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

MEETINGS at St. Paul's Parish House, 20 Fearing Road, Hingham (across the street from Citizens Bank) at 7:30 PM on First and Third Mondays of the month (including holidays). Also, occasionally, there is a meeting when a month has a 5th Monday.

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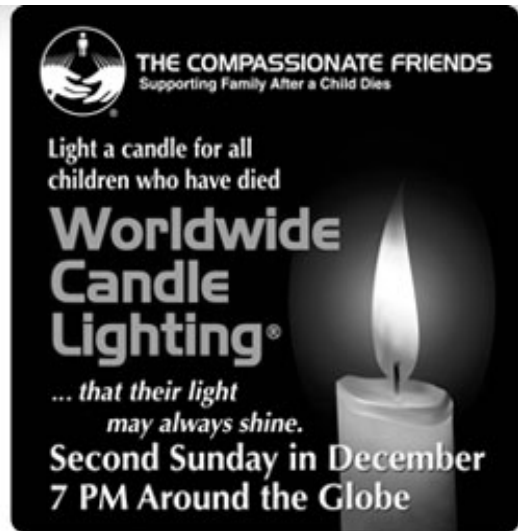
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:

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PHONE FRIENDS

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

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Paula MacDonald	781-447-6811
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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 12th. 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 12, 2010, 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.

FROM THE EDITOR

Holidays were a big deal in our family. There was always much excitement and anticipation. And it was wondrous and heart-warming to watch the way my sons viewed Christmas through the magical prism of youth. Like most families we had our traditions....trimming the tree, baking cookies, wrapping gifts, hanging the stockings, lots of food. As my sons grew up, got married and had children of their own they continued these traditions and I was fortunate enough to spend most of my Christmases with one or all of them and their families. One such Christmas, my last with John, I spent in Sun Valley, Idaho with him, his wife and two children. It was nothing short of magical. I was so deeply touched that he wanted it to be so special for all of us and it was... a sleigh ride in the snow to an old rustic lodge for dinner complete with carolers and plum pudding ,stringing popcorn, shopping, wrapping, our favorite music, a traditional dinner and so very much more. It is a strange phenomenon that a memory so dear and so treasured can be held in the heart and in the mind with such clarity and intensity that we feel as if we are actually in the presence of another person. We can feel them, touch them, smell them and hear them. We can re-live that event as if it was really happening again. It is a glorious state and we wish to make it go on forever. Then reality bursts in and shatters this joyous reverie. It's like falling from a great height and crashing to the ground. We feel traumatized, we feel sad, we feel angry, we refuse to believe it. We cycle through the stages of grief once again. Most of the time we are incredibly sad. I'm sad a lot. Sad that there will be no more memories to be made with John. I try to remember the ones that I have...every one of them wonderful. But I have to cry and I have to grieve sometimes....deeply, darkly and by myself. No one loves my child the way I do. No one knows the pain I feel of losing him to death.. No one feels the hole in my heart like I do....except another bereaved parent. Loving a child is a joy beyond words. Losing that child is an agony that passes beyond all understanding. What little comfort there is I find in the knowledge that my son was a good man, a loving man, a generous and spiritual man and he lived his life with purpose and with joy. His brothers are probably even more in tune with this than I am. Their courage and ability to survive has been an inspiration to me and for that I am eternally grateful. And I am just as grateful for my friends in TCF. Without them, I would not have survived. As one grieving parent said "We cannot walk inside you but we can walk beside you." Only another bereaved parent knows and understands that they cannot take away our pain. We just try to help each other survive, to cope with this new life we are still living, this new world we are still in. We hold each other up when we are unable to stand alone. We cry, we scream, we rail at the universe. We ask "WHY?" again and again and again. We re-live our children's lives and we relive their deaths and we collapse under the weight of such abject sorrow and grief. But we survive We move through time and pain and we learn to carry on. And slowly, slowly we begin to function again...each of us in our own way, at our own pace. Changed forever. Sometimes we take one step forward and two steps back most mostly we make progress. What choice is there, really? Many of us have other children, grandchildren or siblings or spouses. They need us and love us. And we need and love them. We begin to re-join life. We begin to feel joy again and hope for a future...not the future we had expected or wanted but one filled with love and possibility. And we begin to remember the love and the joy more than the pain and the sorrow.

This holiday season will be different from the ones we knew. May we all find the gratitude in our hearts for the gifts we've been given. Let the memories of our children's lives outweigh the memories of their deaths. Let us step outside of our own pain and suffering and offer joy to someone else....our children, our spouses, our siblings, our friends, a stranger. And let us light a candle as a symbol of the light of our children's spirits and let us find the divinity in ourselves and in each other. I believe with all my heart and soul that it is what our children want.

We need not walk alone.

Peace,

Brenda

"Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY."

~ Darcie Sims

The time of Christmas rings
With tears and laughter.
And if you listen deeply,
You will find the sound of every voice you ever knew.

Sacha

FOR SIBLINGS

One

It was only *1* second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action in a lifetime of seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions. It was so fast, so permanent, so irreversible, so hopeless. This moment, this thought, this decision, this action do not define him, do not honor him, do not immortalize him. It is the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that define him, that honor him, that immortalize him.

I remember my brother in all of the other seconds, and thoughts, and decisions, and actions that preceded this *one*. I remember him coming home from the hospital, lip synching in the basement, falling out of the tree, biking across campus, coming home from school, from boot camp, from war... I remember him hiking, and skiing, and running, and laughing, and crying. I remember how safe I always felt when he was around. I knew he would take care, protect, defend.

I don't remember exactly when my brother became an amazing human being – I just looked at him one day and knew he was. I knew that nothing would make him change his mind about me. He was without judgment, without prejudice, without preconception. I knew my brother because we talked and he listened. I respected my brother most for his humanity – for being so sensitive, so vulnerable, so honest. I loved my brother for sharing the load when it was too hard for someone he loved to carry alone. I knew my brother because he left so much of him in me.

I trusted and respected my brother's decisions in the preceding 946,080,000 seconds, I have to trust and respect this *one* decision the same. I honor my brother by honoring myself. I do not dwell in that *one* moment, instead I celebrate and cherish all of the others. In that *1* second, *one* thought, *one* decision, *one* action, I found the strength he had given me and I will not let him down. I will not let that *one* moment be the only *one*.

Michele Mallory

Get Well Soon Poem

I know our loss is very great
but I'm sure many people can
relate
I know its hard to say good-bye
don't hold back your tears! It's ok
to cry
Just hold my hand and we will
stand up high
We will gather strength from one
another
hugging and holding each other
we will find each other and
together we will be
once again, a family



By Alyssa Flora, age 13
In memory of her brother Bryson, age 9

A Tribute to my Sister
Lori Lee Smith

I Saw You

I saw you today in the morning dew

As brilliant as a sea of shimmering diamonds

I shared the most amazing sunrise with you today

A million shades of red so random in their perfection

I heard you today in the laugh of my children

An enchanting melody a thousand angels strong

I walked with you today and we talked about everything

. . . and nothing all at once

I saw you today in the changing of the leaves

The colors of your life, the close of one season

And the ushering in of another

I sat beside a stream with you today

The peaceful flow, steady and constant

I saw you today . . . and you were perfect

And rest assured . . . I shall see you again

Avery Smith
TCF Ada Area Chapter

As Long As I Can

As long as I can, I will look at the world for both of
us.

As long as I can, I will laugh with the bird, I will sing
with flowers, I will play to the stars, for both of us.
As long as I can, I will remember how many things on
this earth were your joy. And I will live as well as you
would want me to live, as long as I can.

.. by Sascha. (Sascha's son Nino drowned at age 3;
years later, her daughter Eve died by suicide at age
21.)

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.
Ted Keane Cochran
Nancy Ann Farrar-Hood
Richard "Ricky" Hoffman
Anthony "Terry" Curran
John J. Ho Sang
Nicholas Alexander
Andrew Alfred Carlson
Joe Doyle
Joy Marie Hanlon
Andrew "Drew" Robert Tyrell
Matthew Thomas Simpson
Nancy Andreasen
Timothy Lee Hannan
Herbert L. "Royce" Whitaker IV
Jason Adelsberg
Roger Alan Smith*

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

*Albert P. Cassino Jr.
Tommy Camejo
Harry Goldman
Mark T. Burns
Lael T. King
Rodney E. Andrews Jr.
Glenn Collin Standifer
Theodore "Teddy" Pearson
Alison Marie Hayes
Jason Michael Coscia
Joanne Myrick
Eric Myles Berger
Garrett J. Lysakowski
Bo Craig Falco
Eric Paul Burgoyne
David F. Terrio
William "Bill" Foronjy
Frank LoConte
William James Falco
Kory Ambler
John Bounocore III
Timothy Lee Hannan
Aimee Leigh Bullard*

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

*Albert P. Cassino Jr.
Kory Ambler
Eric Myles Berger
Angus Alexander MacDonald
Alan Howard Freedman
Michael Jonathan Burak
Christopher Smeglin
Larry Thornton
Adam James Wade
Jordan Dale Cibley
Kimberly Ann Rojas
Bruce Cohen
Alfred Gomez
Clifton Durand
Guy V. Schipellite*

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

*Christopher McGovern
Brian Patrick Regan Jr.
Larry Thornton
Matt McCue
Kimberly Ann Rojas
Jeremy S. Griffin
Grant Dean Lynch
Robert Antonio Castro
Tonya Marie Barnes
Lex Rothman
Willem Adair Berkelaar
William Joseph "Joe" Baker
John Anthony Leary
CJ Garber
Matthew John Steuterman*

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

*Brendan Patrick Wolfe
Dean Alexander Hannan
John Buonocore III
Avery Weitbrecht Crompton
Ryan Matther MacVicar Hannan
William F. Dunn Jr.*

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

*Mark Edward Lucius
Clifton Durand
Philip Arthur Cheserone
Joshua Gabriel Rowan
Dean Alexander Hannan
Lindsay K. Pellegrino
Jacob J. Orchard
Avery Weitbrecht Crompton
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



Newly Bereaved ... Burden of Grief

As I struggle with words to find answers
Reading and writing my pain
The pages grow blurred before eyes that are tired
From this crushing emotional drain.
The relief that comes from the writing
Parallels what I feel when I read—
To open myself to the torture of loss
Seems to soothe this unbearable need.
There's no pleasure in life at this moment
It's an effort to get through the day
And I labor to stay above water...
But the shoreline is so far away.
So I pick up a pen or a book about grief
And it serves as a raft for a while.
And I hope, as my tears fall on pages of pain
That I'll learn once again how to smile.
As I swim toward the shore of acceptance
I pray for the peace of belief
That heaven's your home and you're waiting for me
Then I'll finally be free of this grief.

By Sally Migliaccio, TCF Babylon, NY
From *Tracey, An Extraordinary Child*

In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled
a dreadful distance. You have come,
seeking solace, understanding, hope,
threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.
In this place you can relax and breathe . . .
the coats of others' expectations taken off.
Walk into these few days as into an oasis
where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed.
In this place all names can be spoken;
in this place each one's story can be told.
We will not be discouraged by your sorrow;
in this place ALL feelings, we enfold.
Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting;
we do not count how many tears are shed.
Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage,
for the long and winding road we see ahead.
And those we love are pleased we are together,
smile down on us, and bless these days,
glad for every tiny step we are taking
as they send their light to guide us on our ways.
Traveling with us as we journey onward,
sending strength for what the miles may bring,
they are a part of everything we do that matters -
in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

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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Candles in the Night For Candle Lighting Ceremony

Candles flame in darkness,
flicker, steadily glow,
bringing light from shadows
and help to soothe us so.
Our children, brothers, sisters,
gave our lives true light;
we use the candles' beacons
to connect us in the night.
As we lit the candles,
our wish and our request
was that they'd see our signals
and know our love's expressed.
As their lights join our lights,
our worlds touch and flame . . .
Now with all the candles burning,
we will softly say their names.

Genesse Bourdeau Gentry



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.

SEASONED GRIEF

There used to be a point to summing up a year just past
not as a personal accomplishment but as a reflection.
Leaving previous hurts behind was welcomed and the sensible
thing to do.

I thought I was getting wiser as I was getting older.

With new years clean and full of possibilities,
becoming another person seemed simple,
another chance at getting it right,

like a redemption, being forgiven for
having blundered or been found wanting.

But death changed everything, without permission.

Resolutions, made sincerely and broken quickly,
offended my need to hold on to the past,
to rewind life, fast backwards,
so I could capture what I had lost.

Still, time went on, regardless of my pleas.

And when exhaustion set in, as eventually it must,

I understood there would be another future,
not the one I thought I had the right to expect
but one where I dared carry hope in my heart again.

*By Eva Lager ~ TCF, Perth, Western Australia
From We Need Not Walk Alone, Spring 1999 Issue*

Bittersweet parents we are,
Loving and giving still.
We render what tears
Grief demands –
Until, out of grieving darkness,
We come to celebrate
Our children's life,
And our own.

Sascha

Milky Way

We looked at each other with a question in our eyes
Yet we knew the answer no matter how much we'd cry
No matter what words mean today or any day
An angel sings, dances and plays on the Milky Way

The sky is filled with hope not here anymore
It left with someone, a spirit we adore
In our hearts we feel him everyday
An angel singing, dancing and playing on the Milky Way

Life is strange and tests you in a perpetual trial
You don't know how strange until you lose a child
And then something happens in a most mysterious way
An angel sings, dances and plays on the Milky Way

Sing and dance forever our angel way up there
Play all you want as we lovingly stare
Just be happy as we proudly say
An angel sings, dances and plays on the Milky Way

By Bob Nesom September 1, 2010
In honor of Alex Nesom, 20 when he passed away in August 2009

Remember

Remember the children, we ask tonight,
As we continue this wave of light.
Remember the babies, never given a chance,
To grow, to play, to love, or dance.
Remember the toddlers, just starting to live,
Teddy Bears and blankies and big hugs to give.
Remember the children, who grew strong and true,
Maybe struck by an illness that devastated you.
Remember the teen-agers and the promise in each,
Taken suddenly or slowly, beyond our reach.
Don't forget the adult child, fully grown,
Whether 18 or 80, we still called them our own.
Our grandchildren, sisters and brothers have died,
For nieces and nephews and cousins, we've cried.
Some of us say, "I've lost my dreams,"
While others say, "my memories."
So tonight we remember with this candlelight,
So like our love that shines so bright.

Marilyn Rollins
Lake-Porter County, IN Chapter
The Compassionate Friends

Grandparents Remembrance

We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two - fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

~ By Susan Mackey
TCF, Rutland VT

"No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear." —C.S. Lewis

A Name for My Pain

I have given a name to my pain—
it's called "Longing."
I long for what was,
and what might have been
I long for his touch and smell of sweat;
I long to hold him one more time.
I long to look on his beautiful face
and impress it upon my memories and heart.
I long to return to the day before
and protect him from his death.
I long to take his place,
so he may live and have sons too.
I long for time to pass much faster,
so my longing and pain will lessen.
Will they?

By June Williams-Muecke
TCF, Houston West Chapter

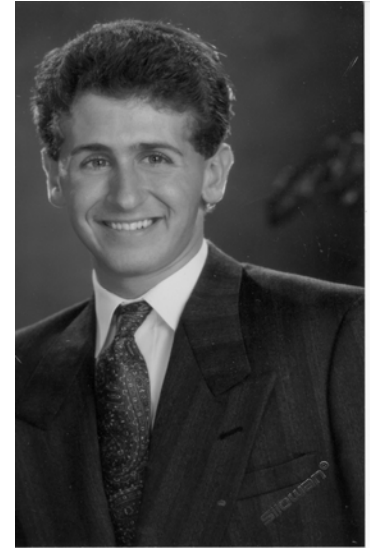
"It isn't for the moment you are struck that you need courage, but for the long uphill climb back to sanity, faith and security."

~ Anne Morrow Lindberg

Michael's Memory Box

The other day I opened the closet in my bedroom, stood on my tip toes, reached up to the very top shelf and took down a box. Although it is the size to hold shoes, this particular cardboard box no longer has that reason to be. For it was in the Fall of 2004 that it took on a greater purpose.

September 9th of that year, my son, Michael Jonathan Burak, died after fighting a heroic battle against the disease of Heroin 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." I don't think that Michael consciously 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.



Our family was shattered. Michael was gone from our lives and, as much as we wanted to, we couldn't bring him back...or could we? Sometimes it takes a child to see things that we, grown ups, can't. In this particular case, an idea was born by my granddaughter, Samantha, who was then 7 year old. None of us wanted to lose Michael; but we adults recognized that death is final and that Michael would never again be among us in the physical sense. Samantha was determined to keep him with us through her happy memories of him. Samantha decided that our memories needed a special place in which to keep them. And so, the Memory Box came to be. Covered in blue shiny paper with silver stars on it, the box has pictures of Michael on it...as a child, with his sisters, with his nieces and with me, his mother. Printed are Samantha's words. "This is Michael's memory box. Put the note or memory in the box. Each star on the box is a memory of Michael. "From the mouth of babes, it is said, amazing ideas spring forth.

Inside the box it is written. This memory box is made in honor of the memory of our beloved son, brother, uncle and friend Michael Burak. Each year on Michael's birthday we will put a memory we have inside. We will not look at them until the following year. Each year new memories will be added as we read the old ones. May this box bring comfort and joy to those who read its contents.

As the years have passed other treasures have found their way into this box and it is beginning to get filled. A drawing Michael made when he was 5, a card Michael sent to me, a picture, a note sent to me from a close friend. I look at the card Michael sent to his grandfather, Papa Saul, on Valentine's Day. It reads... Happy Valentine's Day from your favorite grandkid! Inside it said. "Don't worry, I didn't tell the others" That is so Michael. He had the best sense of humor! As I look back over past memories shared I reread one written back in January, 2005, the first birthday after Michael's passing. His sister wrote, "Michael would call me on the phone when he lived in Brookline for cooking advice. I've got a mango, some shrimp and a bottle of white wine. What should I do?" I would then spend the next 15 minutes inventing a recipe with what he had in the house. Sometimes the 3 items were ridiculous. (i.e. a coconut, pasta and an ear of corn). I don't think he really made my suggestions, I think he just wanted to talk and it was his way to connect. I miss those talks". Opening another envelope I continue to read, "I remember Uncle Michael. I remember he gave me hugs. That's what I remember. Happy Birthday Uncle Michael. Love, Abbie". Hearing those stories, those memories, truly does bring Michael back and he is with me once more.

Continued on Page 9

Michael's Memory Box (cont'd)

Michael had an impact on every one with whom he came in contact. Although he was here for 31 short years, memories of Michael will continue to live on in each of us. Whether it be the funny experiences we remember or the challenging times he put us through, none of us can say that we were not changed by Michael. Michael died of a drug overdose and that must never be forgotten. But equally important is to remember that within Michael's Memory Box holds the special moments shared between him and his family. The happy times, the sad times, the silly times, the outrageous times. Celebrating life together as a family. That's what I remember about my son Michael. And isn't that what life is all about!



Harriet Burak

This newsletter is sponsored by Harriet Burak in loving memory of her son Michael



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

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.

SNOW

Every snowflake that falls is unique and has its own individual design. There are beautiful patterns in each snowflake and even the tiniest of flakes have their own markings. These patterns change again and again—even after the flake touches the ground. Each snowflake is a cause for wonder, each flake is one of a kind. No two are exactly alike. Like the snowflake, our beautiful children were each unique and special; some we only dreamed about and some danced upon the earth. They filled our lives with wonder and transformed our world. We held them too briefly, but we will hold them in our hearts forever. We shall remember them always. At this time of remembering, it may help to reflect upon how our lives have been enriched by the love we have given and the love we have received from our children. Our children leave treasures behind that time can never take away.

Written by Denise Falzon, TCF Lake Area, MI
In loving memory of her son, Brian Falzon

Giving Myself Permission

It has been nearly five years since my only child died, but this will be my sixth Christmas without his unique enthusiasm, anticipation and happiness at the prospect of the holiday season. After two rocky attempts to handle the holiday season, I gave myself permission to do what I wanted to do. I am not accountable to anyone for my ups and downs at the holidays. Last year was easier than the previous year and that year was easier than the one before. But there is a reason for this: in talking with other members of our Compassionate Friends chapter, I realized that I owe no explanations. Therefore, I make it easy on myself and on those who love me. Instead of getting caught up in the commercialism of the holiday, I contemplate the true meaning of the season and initiate activities that have little to do with the season. I intentionally avoid Christmas because it is, simply, too painful for me. Others in our Compassionate Friends group have returned to their normal celebrations with children and extended family. Some have modified their traditions; a few have chosen to take a trip and escape the holiday memories entirely. We give ourselves permission to handle this time of year in a way that is most soothing to us. If we do not do this, we suffer setback after setback in our grief. We often make small concessions for others in our family, of course. But are we really in the spirit? Probably not. Does it really matter? Probably not. Each year I now put a wreath on our front door. I buy a gift for an underprivileged child and include a card that is signed with my son's name. I send gift cards to those who I am morally obliged to remember and buy small gifts for friends and family who truly appreciate the thought and effort I have made. That's Christmas now. I have given myself permission to handle it in the only way that keeps serenity, peace and hope in my heart.

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

Grief is not a mere word, but a journey through the pathways of our heart. To where our journey leads us is never certain, but is painful just the same. Grief should not be measured by pain, but also by love. To love is to hurt, to hurt is to heal, to heal is to accept. No grief is ever the same. Please, be kind to yourself.

By Susie Cross
In Memory of her son Jasper Burns, 3/16/83 – 2/11/99

....And a very special thank you

To Barry & Angie Hayes who this year and for the past several years, have generously donated the Christmas tree for the candle lighting. A gift from their hearts appreciated and felt by all.

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?

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Donation enclosed \$ _____

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

Editor's E-mail: bltower11@verizon.net

Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are.
Let me learn from you, love you, savor you, bless you
before you depart.
Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect
tomorrow.
Let me hold you while I may, for it will not always be so.
One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my
face in the pillow,
or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky,
and want more than all the world for your return.

~by Mary Jean Irion

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: _____

Messages: _____

From: _____

Address: _____

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

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Michael & Alice Desmond parents of **Michael Ryan Desmond**

Elaine & John Boc parents of **Derek Bok**

Ed & Janice Duffy parents of **Caitlyn Duffy**

Ellen Commesso mother of **James "Jimmy" K. Falco**

Jesse Faulkner & Leslie McCulloch parents of **Taylor C. Faulkner**

Ken & Ellen Robinson grandparents of **Christian Phillip Robinson**

Peggy Whitman mother of **Amy Whitman**

April Castle sister of **Amy Whitman**

Stephen & Carolyn Walsh parents of **Phoebe Isabelle Walsh**

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

Faye Balcom; in loving memory of my son, **Frank LoConte** 1960-1997

Lois & Bill Giordano; In loving memory of our son **Michael P. Giordano**

Gilda Peruzzi; in memory of **Vincent Peruzzi**

Jan Piccarini; in loving memory of **Mike Piccarini** May 1976-June 2004. With the approaching holiday season we miss you more and more. Love, Mom & Danielle

Harriet Burak; in memory of my beloved son **Michael Jonathan Burak** January 1973-September 2004. Six years have passed my sweet boy, since you left us in the physical sense. Your spirit lives on in all you love. Much love, Mom, sisters Michelle & Stacey and all our family.

Eleanor Burns; in memory of **Mark T. Burns** September 1953-December 1992. You are always in our hearts and thoughts. We love you and miss you in many ways. Mom, Lyn, Brendan and Colman

Barbara Curtin; in loving memory of my son **James Blankenship** March 1966-November 2000

Ann Hanlon; in loving memory of my sweet daughter **Joy Marie Hanlon**

Kathryn Lysakowski; in loving memory of my nephew **Mark Lysakowski**

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS Cont'd

Linda Belmont mother of **Allyson M. Jones**

Carol Currie mother of **Jeffrey William Currie**

Greg & Barbara Wolfe parents of **Brendan Patrick Wolfe**

Kathleen DiFabio mother of **Anthony Rocco**

Barbara Berger mother of **Eric Myles Berger**

Tom & Rosanne Frazar parents of **Alyssa Frazar**

Bill & Pat Quinn parents of **Haven Quinn**

Catherine McCusker mother of **Andrew McCusker**

*When you are sorrowful look again in your heart,
and you shall see that in truth you are weeping
for that which has been your delight. ~*

From The Prophet
by Kahlil Gibran

**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”.*