

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NORTHSHORE/BOSTON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



July 2008

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

Meetings are held the 1st Monday of each month at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 235 Park Street, North Reading at 7:30 P.M. We are a self-sustaining organization with no funds except what we receive through donations from members and newsletter recipients. Please join with us at a meeting.

Grief support after the death of a child

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

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

The vision of The Compassionate Friends is that everyone who needs us will find us and everyone who finds us will be helped.

National Office:

The Compassionate Friends, Inc.
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www.thecompassionatefriends.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Monday July 7 - Ask It Basket
Jeff & Reenie

Monday Aug 4 - Facing Difficult Dates
Eileen

Chapter Leader: Carmen Pope 978-750-4043
connect@tcfnoshore-boston.org

Newsletter Editor: Cindi Bolivar 781-944-0016
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www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org

Thank you to our recent Web Site Sponsors

**This month's website is sponsored
in memory of:**

**Our sons and brothers,
Christopher, on the 14th
anniversary of his death,
and
Tom, on the 11th
anniversary of his death.**

**Our lives keep changing, but
our love for you is constant.
You are forever in our hearts.**

**Love,
Mom, Dad, Kelly, Dave**

Our Children Remembered



July Birthdays

Sheryl Lynn Becker	07/20/67
daughter of Millie & Jerry Becker	
Edward Michael Hedrington	07/04/75
son of Jo Hedrington	
Tiffany Marie Hines	07/11/89
daughter of Jeff and Debbie Hines	
Steven Michael Kerr	07/04/69
son of Bob and Rosalie Kerr	
Sean W. Leblanc	07/24/74
son of Carol Leblanc	
Karen Ann Muscovitz	07/13/76
daughter of Arnie and Alice Muscovitz	
Reid Robert Sacco	07/24/84
son of Gene & Lorraine Sacco	
Michael Sawyer	07/12/81
son of Diane and Herb Sawyer	
Debbie Sevier	07/01/67
daughter of Daughter of Fred and Trudy Sevier	

Regrettably missed in June-Birthdays

Wayne Allen	06/06/80
son of Paul Allen	
Lt. Stephen E. Gil	06/14/71
son of Eileen & Larry Gil	
Eric Kronk	06/18/78
son of Kathy and Walter Kronk	
Billy Lajoie	06/14/75
son of Jacqui Lajoie	
Kyle Joseph Robinson	06/16/90
son of Erin Maribito	
John Joseph Nelson	06/02/71
son of Gladys & Robert Nelson	
Jeannie O'Hare	06/27/57
daughter of Jean and Tom O'Hare	
Ricky Burnham	06/02/68
son of Tia and Terry Tessimond	
Donald Tottingham	06/30/54
son of Mal and Bobbie Tottingham	



July Anniversaries

Kristin Amico	07/01/00
daughter of Joseph Amico	
Lino J Brosco	07/05/07
son of Leno and Emilia Brosco	
Peter M Cassely Jr	07/28/96
son of Nancy Cassely	
Christian Frechette	07/13/07
son of grandson of Janet Frechette	
Jeanette Lee Glavin	07/08/05
daughter of Cynthia Glavin	
Kyle Joseph Robinson	07/18/05
son of Erin Maribito	
Thomas Hart (Tom) Pope	07/06/97
son of Carmen and Jeff Pope	
Gregg Matthew Wolfson	07/03/91
son of Jack and Sheila Wolfson	

As a regular feature, the newsletter is used to acknowledge the Birthdays and Anniversary dates of the death of our children/siblings at the request of parents/siblings. Information needs to be received by the **1st of the month prior to the issue** when you want your child remembered. If the information is missing or not correct please send the correct data to:

Cindi Bolivar
28 Colburn Rd
Reading, MA 01867

Childs Name: _____

son/daughter of: _____

Birthday: _____ Angel Date: _____

All entries will be listed in the appropriate newsletter as accurately as possible. We are all grieving parents and mistakes can happen. Please let me know immediately if there is a problem and it will be corrected in the next issue.

Chapter Sharing Pages

From the Chapter Leader

One of the topics frequently raised at our chapter meetings is how bereaved families are affected by life's milestones after the death of a child. Some of us continue to add years to our child's age at the time of death, even though our child will no longer continue to grow or to develop. I often find myself saying that my son would be twenty-two years old now, even though he never lived past the age of eleven. Because he continues to "age" in my mind, I think about what he might be doing at each age and stage as our family keeps moving forward in time. I remember feeling sadder than usual one autumn and not quite understanding why, until I realized that Tom would have been a freshman in high school that year – I was mourning a missed milestone.

Throughout life, bereaved families must face many missed milestones, whether these are first steps, first words, first days of school, graduations, first jobs, weddings, or becoming grandparents, just to name a few. However, what I have also discovered is that, as a bereaved parent, I sometimes have unexpected reactions to the milestones I am *not* missing.

My daughter recently graduated from high school. The months leading up to this event were very emotional ones for me. As happy as I was for my daughter and as proud as I was for what she had achieved, there was the anticipation of a major transition in our life as she was preparing to end this high school phase and move on to college in the fall. Along with this anticipation was a reminder that years ago, before Tom died, I had projected that we would have three graduations this year – my oldest son from college, my daughter from high school, and my youngest son from eighth grade. On the weekend of her graduation, I noticed that my husband was sighing more than usual, and when I asked him if everything was OK, he simply responded that this should not be our *first* graduation.

In spite of all of our conflicting emotions, we joyously celebrated Kelly's graduation, which was impressively beautiful and meaningful. Along with the pride, the joy, and the love we felt, there was also an element of sadness, as this event brought to mind not only the "end" of a chapter in Kelly's life, but also the missed milestones in Tom's life. I fully expected to be extremely emotional during all of the ceremonies surrounding the graduation, and I admit to shedding a couple of tears, but what came as a surprise to me was the overwhelming sense of relief that Kelly had made it. I would be dishonest if I did not admit that there was a part of me that simply could not trust that she would live to reach that milestone. I guess this is a symptom of the loss of innocence which accompanies the trauma one experiences when one loses a child. In my case, having lived through the death of two children, I struggle sometimes to believe that my other two will be safe.

I share this experience as an example of how we are forever changed after the death of our children and how this change colors all of our future life experiences. Realistically, how could we *not* be changed after such a traumatic event? Among other things, we may become more sensitive, more realistic, less trusting, less innocent, more afraid, more compassionate, or more understanding. These changes will come into play as we move through life's milestones. I also share the experience to point out that there are times when our feelings span a very wide emotional spectrum and that this is perfectly normal. Being happy and sad at the same time is not unusual for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. It becomes a fact of life, a life worth living.

Carmen

Chapter Sharing Pages

The Healing Power of the Pen

By Alice J. Wisler ©

The first year after a death of a child is like having the worse noise possible running through your head each day and night. There is no way to turn the horrendous sounds off because there is no off button.

I wrote through that noise. I wrote from the heavy bag of emotions bereaved parents must carry--anger, guilt, sorrow and confusion, all the "what ifs" and "how comes" and "whys."

I wrote of longing for a blond-haired boy with blue eyes who laughter brightened hospital rooms. A quiet spot under weeping willows at a local park is where I carried my pen, journal and pain. As I wrote over the course of many months, I was, although I didn't realize it at the time, providing therapy for myself.

Some days when the weather did not permit a trip to the park and my body and mind harbored excruciating pain, I shut myself in a room, away from my other children and husband. I'd grab my journal and let the experiences of the day and my feelings freely emerge onto each white page. Grammar didn't matter, penmanship went out the window. These aren't a concern when you are writing to survive.

Writing the heartache, complete and honest, is a way of healing. Our cry is, "Help me with this pain!" We find ourselves lamenting as King David did in Psalm 13:2, "How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?" David wrote many of his psalms starting with anger and agony and gradually, ending with hope.

Writing can do that for us. We enter into our devastation, get a good grip on what our struggles are and something about seeing them on paper causes us to realize the pain is not only within us anymore. It is shared, even if only on a sheet of notebook paper. It is documented and the more we write, the better we are able to understand and deal with our intense sorrow.

Some people think only the creative types write, when in reality, writing through the pain is available to anyone who has suffered the loss of a child. "I don't have time," many say. "What will I write?" others wonder. The blank page scares some because they think they have to fill it with something profound.

But just writing a memory of your child or a few lines about how you felt after he died is a notable start. If we think of writing as a private endeavor and an effective tool, not a paper to be graded by a high school English teacher, we will conquer many of the doubts about our ability. In time, we will see that writing helps us become

better in tune with our feelings and thoughts. It clarifies our lives and gives us understanding.

Other reasons to take the time to write are:

- To experience personal growth.
- To leave a legacy or a keepsake so that there will be recordings of what and who our child was.
- To demonstrate a way of cherishing our child.
- To feel a connection to our child as we remember the things we shared here on earth.

We also are honoring our grief, our pain and what has happened to us. We are validating its existence. As studies have shown, writing is healthy for our minds and bodies.

Professor James Pennebaker claims that writing actually helps the physical body when the writer is able to open up, by sharing deep feelings on paper over a period of time. In his study, half a group of students at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, wrote their heartfelt thoughts and feelings about a stressful event from their lives; the other half wrote about superficial topics. Each group wrote for twenty minutes a day, for four consecutive days.

Before writing and immediately after writing, blood pressure and heart rates were tested and a galvanic skin response was done. Six weeks later, the students had their blood tested again.

The group that had written about trivial topics showed no sign of changes. But the group that had poured their pain onto paper, claimed writing had actually calmed them. Their skin was drier after writing and both heart rate and blood pressure had decreased. Their blood work even showed an increase in lymphocytes, the white blood cells that work to keep the immune system healthy.

Writing through the heartache of losing a child is some of the best therapy I have found on this journey. I didn't know how helpful it was. I just knew I needed to organize any thoughts and get them out on paper. Now, four years since my four-year-old son Daniel's death, I see that when all the evidence is presented, there is no reason not to write. It causes dim skies to light up when not only the pain, but also the love and cherished memories, are recorded.

Chapter Sharing Pages

From the Editor:

As we move forward in our grief, we find that things around us continue to change, whether or not we are paying attention, listening or even care.

When our son died in December of 2001, we were left with a void so great neither my husband nor I were sure we could get thru the next few minutes, never thinking about hours or days. But we did. We somehow stumbled thru each waking moment encased in a numbness so great that became robotic – movement had no meaning, and we went thru the motions without emotion.

One thing led to another and just 3 short months after Joey died we went to our first meeting of The Compassionate Friends. Like so many of you, we walked thru the doors not knowing what to expect, and found smiling faces, and people actually laughing with one another, while reaching out to us telling us they “understood”. Needless to say, also like so many others we left that night saying “I don’t think we’ll go back – we don’t want to be “one of those people”... but when the meeting rolled around the next month we did go back and now over 6 years later we still come to the meetings. We come now to welcome and support those who are looking for answers as we once were.

In April of 2004, I took over as Newsletter Editor for our chapter. This was a labor of love and a healing path for me. It has brought me much solace over these last 4 years as I looked for just the right pieces for each issue, and then worked to bring all the pieces together in a format that would help my fellow bereaved parents. Further down the road, Mariann stepped in to help research the pieces and the load was lessened a bit.

The time had come for another change for me. I am ready to pass the “paper and pen” to the next person who will continue to heal on this journey by becoming the editor of our newsletter.

Bill Smith will be taking over beginning with the July issue. Bill will add his contact information in the next issue – I wish him well with this endeavor, and hope he finds as much peace thru the process as I did.

Reggie and I will still be very active within our chapter as it unfortunately continues to grow each month, but I will use my extra time now to concentrate on those things I have not felt like doing for a long time – sorting thru old pictures, creating albums for the family and just enjoying time with my grandkids and watching them grow.

Thank you to everyone for your kind words and support over the last 4 years. It has truly been part of my healing and I appreciate having had the opportunity to do it.

Sincerely
Cindi

IN THE SILENCE

In the silence you hear me,
In the silence I am here.
In the silence you can feel me,
In the silence it is clear.....
That my spirit hasn't left you,
I am just a thought away,
You can see me in the shadows,
Anytime you look my way.
Look for me in the sunshine,
And in the stars at night.
In the wind, trees and flowers,
Everything that is in sight.
Talk to me, say my name,
Know that I'm still here,
In my death I have a new life,
And one day it will be clear.
So talk to me and look for me
In everything you do,
For I haven't gone so far away,
I'm really right next to you

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Submitted by Romelle Lysenko-TCF Bridgewater
~reprinted from Bridgewater, NJ TCF May 2006
Newsletter

Chapter Sharing Pages



TELEPHONE FRIENDS

Billerica	Jeff Moore, son 17, moped accident	978-663-8539
Chelmsford/Lowell	Art & Barbara Moores, daughter, 10, hit by car	978-828-2626
Danvers	Carmen Pope, infant son, anencephaly; 11 year old son, boating accident	978-750-4043
Ipswich	Eileen & Don Veitch, daughter, 16, auto accident	978-618-5048
Andover	Steve Hartel and Lisa Alecci, daughter ,6, leukemia	978-470-2323
Plaistow, NH	Lynne Jeffries, son, 4, drowning	603-382-4134
Rockport/Cape Ann	Jim and June McCloy, son, 32, complications during bone marrow transplant	978-546-7634
Lynn	Pat Karakashian, son, 29, Drug Overdose	781-593-5875
North Reading	Margo Vogis, son, 20, automobile accident	978-664-0688
North Andover	Catherine Olson, daughter, 27, pedestrian accident	978-681-8341
Marshfield	Trudy Seveir, daughter, 27, suicide	781-837-3171
Cambridge	Lin Campbell, daughter, 23, drug overdose	617-576-9290
Woburn	Alaina Huxtable, grandson 4, accident	781-933-6845
Lynn	Gladys Nelson, son 24, cancer, special needs	781-595-4124
Winchester	Maureen McCormack, son 20, drowning	781-729-1878
Malden	Marnie Smithers, son 13, ATV Accident	781-322-1722
Reading	Stacey Smith, son 23, suicide	781-944-5841

Fireworks Are Like the Love in Our Hearts

July brings Central Oregonians lingering blue skies, lazy afternoons and the Fourth of July celebration, complete with the grand fireworks finale bolting from the top of Pilot Butte. This was one of my son's favorite holidays. When he was six I asked him why fireworks were so special to him. He said, "The lights explode in the dark and make the whole sky light up!" That was obvious. I said "Hum?" He gave me one of his "Oh mom" looks, then went on to say "The fireworks are like the love in our hearts, we should always try to spread our love out to others". I knew then and I still am aware today that profound wisdom comes from the lips of our children. From the summer on, in my mind, fireworks have been a triumphant testament of love's enduring power and wonder. I miss my son, Joshua terribly. I comfort myself knowing that his wisdom and kindness were precious gifts in my life.

Wherever you are on the Fourth of July, I hope that the splendor of sparkling fireworks might comfort as you acknowledge that the love you hold dear for your child is the light that is able to shine through you. We all have known grief well, yet as compassionate friends we need not walk alone in the darkness. We can lighten the path for others.

Grief can cripple and destroy us, but as we gather to share each other's burden, we are able to gain strength. Love for our children is our common flame, sharing and caring keep the flames afire. I look forward to our next meeting and the opportunity to hug and listen to my comrades.

~lovingly lifted from TCF Salem, OR Newsletter

~written by Jane Oja, TCF, Central Oregon Chapter

Chapter Sharing Pages



LOVE GIFTS



A love gift is a contribution that is given to TCF in memory of a child who has died. The funds are used to aid the work of our chapter for the newsletter; postage, books, and other needed material. All donations are tax deductible. Our thanks to all of you who have supported us in this way.

Jeffrey & Carmen Pope. In Loving Memory of Tom on the 11th anniversary of his death. Birthday; 12/5/85. Angel Date; 7/6/97. You will live on in our hearts forever. We miss you and we love you. Love, Mom, Dad, Kelly & Dave.

Linda Corliss. In Loving Memory of Jimmy Corliss. Birthday; April 2, 1980. Angel Date; Oct. 27, 1991. I miss you everyday. Love, Mom

Jo Hedrington. In Loving Memory of Eddie Hedrington. Birthday; 7/4/75. Angel Date; 5/22/04. We love and miss you every day. You are always in our hearts. Love, Mom & Lisa

Gerald Irving. In Loving Memory of Kara Irving. Sincerely, Jean, Jerry & Greg Irving

John & Elaine Kingston. In Loving Memory of our daughter, "Patty". Thinking of you always. Love Mom & Dad

John & Linda Pace. In Loving Memory of Keith A. Pace. Birthday; 11/10/79. Angel Date; 7/18/2007. Keith, we miss you! Life without you will never be the same. You will always be in our hearts. Love, Mom & Dad

And a special thanks to all who leave donations in the box at each meeting.

Please send your love gifts by mail to **TCF No Shore/Boston, PO Box 1117, Billerica MA 01821-0961** Love Gifts can also be given to your meeting leader at the meetings. Use the form below to assure they are processed exactly as you want them. (**NEWSLETTER ITEMS** should not be sent to this address)

Please note:

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

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

LOVE GIFT received from _____

IN MEMORY OF _____ **Birthday:** _____ **Angel Date:** _____

Message _____

Chapter Sharing Pages

TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person or just the right words that will help you in your grief or comfort you. Remember we have all been there and even though circumstances may be different we really do understand. You are not alone

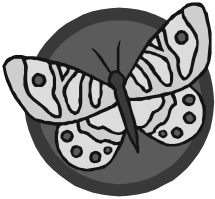
TO OUR OLDER MEMBERS

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back.... remember hearing from others farther along than you...“your pain will not always be this bad it really does get better” Come to the meetings and share your wisdom. Show others that there is hope, from someone who has found it.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NorthShore/Boston Chapter
PO BOX 1117
Billerica, MA 01821-0961

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIALS



NEWSLETTER – June 2008



National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

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

***** CHAPTER WEBSITE: www.TCFNoShore-Boston.org*****

To receive these newsletters via email please send an email to the editor.