



The Compassionate Friends

Greater Providence Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Holiday 2017

In Loving Memory: Matthew Nolan Marandola

We would like to take this opportunity to share with the TCF community some memories of our son Matthew who passed away on September 20th, 2016.

Matt was a member of Harbor House in Providence, a clubhouse for those afflicted with mental illness. This was an illness like any other, but the comments from other members reflect that though this illness was ravaging in many ways it did not define who he was.

In a memorial tribute, Matt's friends and peers at Harbor House shared some accolades to describe Matt. Here are a few of the stories they shared:

- "Matt was willing to help others"
- "Matt was a good friend"
- "Matt was kind hearted,"
- "He was good at impressions like Robert DeNiro and Christopher Walken"



Matt was artistic in music, art, and poetry. He was struck at 18 years old with schizophrenia just weeks before he was to leave for SUNY Albany, NY with the hope of studying optometry. Over the course of 10 years he endured multiple hospitalizations, two stays at Gould Farm (a residential working farm located in the Berkshires that helps people learn to live with their illness). I would often tell him how sorry I was that this

happened to him, and start to cry, he would gently hug me and respond, "It's ok mom, don't cry." I never knew that the human body was capable of manufacturing so many tears over the course of his illness and now in the last year since his passing.

When Matt was five years old my Aunt Kay passed away. She did not have children and was more like a grandmother to my sisters, cousins, and myself. I was driving while Matt was in the back seat, and I started to cry. He asked me why I was crying... my response was that Aunt Kay passed away and I was sad. He responded to me "Well isn't she going to heaven? I answered yes... he then said "Then she will be closer to God, right?...So don't be sad." He was five years old! I remember thinking how does he *get this* at five years old!!



A week after Matt's passing his bank statement came in the mail. There was a \$10.00 recurrent deduction to Save the Children and Special Olympics. He never ceased to amaze you.

Matt enjoyed poetry, photography, drawing, and painting. The following is one of his poems:

Wilted worries
Point epiphany
Worn blue jeans
I sleep on the beach I these worn blue jeans
All that is left....a quiet light inside me

He was not able to have peace on this earth. The result of a destructive illness. But as grieving parents the manner of death escapes us... We really only know that we are here and they are no longer here in the physical sense. But we do know that their soul and spirit will never be far from us.

—Jean Marandola

Holiday Note from Your Chapter Leaders

As another holidays approach, like all of you, Sheila and I struggle to figure out how are we going to do this now that our sons Christopher and Donald are no longer with us. At one time this was a joyous time, but now it can be a horrendous time for bereaved parents. These occasions can often be the hardest things that a newly bereaved parent has to face—all of “the firsts.”

Whether it's Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, or Christmas, we all notice the empty chair at the dinner table. And this can be heart wrenching. This time can also be difficult for family members and friends. They want to help us but they do not know what to do, so it is up to us to tell them what we need. Do we keep the same traditions? This was a major question for Sheila and me because we both have other children—my son Craig and Sheila's daughters Tara and Alyssa and we felt the need to continue celebrating the holidays because our children have lost so much. Do we put up a tree, or send cards? And it is very noticeable that our child's name will be missing? Well this is the time to have this conversation with our family members, let them be part of this decision. This shows them that you know they are hurting also and that you acknowledge their pain. You have to decide what is best for your family and whether you will keep your traditions or make new ones.

Having a support group to share your anxieties about these upcoming events can be helpful. Listening to others who are further down the road in their grief journey share their experiences can help you figure out what to do. This year we will be having our Candle Lighting Ceremony on Sunday December 10, 2017 at the Central Congregational Church at 6 p.m.

Inclusion and sharing with the group has gotten us through many holidays and given us strength and healing from having passed through another painful event. Each passing event tells us that we can survive.

We want to extend to all of you, **a season filled with gentle memories that will bring you peace and comfort.**

Lucille and Sheila

Candles in December

My sadness seems reflected in the music that I hear...
Every young one's glowing face reminds me you're not here.
Shoppers crowd the festive stores; emotions all run high
This world I was a part of once, before that sad July.

This season's meant for happy times; for love, warm hearts,
and cheer.
But grieving families 'round the world remember those not
here.
We struggle through the season, lighting candles to proclaim
Our children aren't forgotten, 'round the world our candles
flame.

I slowly pass through gates thrown wide one clear, cold
Christmas Day.
No toys or playthings do I bring - those gifts of yesterday.
I carry with me just a polished heart of granite made
And walk with grief to where she lies in a silent, silvered
glade.

"Merry Christmas, love," I whisper — the quiet words seem so
forlorn.
"I've brought my heart for you to keep, my gift this Christmas
morn.
It is filled with all my love, though this one's carved of stone...
I'll place it here — it will be near — you'll never be alone."

We parents don't forget, my love; this month we will unite
To honor all we'll light a wall of candles through the night.
The world will know our memories glow with love that's deep
and true
We'll stand as one, and 'fore it's done the Heavens will know,
too.

Please keep my gift, beloved child, close to where you lie,
And know my love surrounds you 'til the day I too shall die.
On the tenth of December my candle's flame will light
I pray you'll see the love we'll free into the starry night.

Sally Migliaccio



Join us for the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting, Sunday, December 10, 2017

We will take part in our annual **Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, December 10, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.** This event will take place at the Central Congregational Church at 296 Angell Street, Providence, RI. At this event, we come together with friends and families for a special program that includes a soloist providing beautiful music to ease our pain, as well as readings from our members that speak of hope, and the love we have for our children. The highlight of the event is lighting a candle and saying our child's name as we go around the room. The lighting of candles begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. When you light your child's candle this begins a wave of light for 24 hours around the globe in memory of our precious children. Refreshments will be served following the program.

What to bring – You are invited to bring a picture or remembrance of your child to be placed on our table where we all gather for friendship and support following the program. We also ask that you bring an unwrapped toy to be donated to children who are in need during the holiday season.

Slide presentation – Becky Sheldon is putting together a slide presentation. If you would like your child's picture(s) included, please email it to tcfprovidence@hotmail.com and please use "TCF Photos" in the subject line of the email. You can also mail it to Becky at 43 North Capalbo Drive, Bradford, RI 02808. Please make a copy of your picture before mailing it just in case it gets lost in the mail. Becky will bring original photos to the candle lighting to return to you, or you can coordinate with her to get them at the January support group meeting. If your child has been part of the slide presentation in the past, those pictures will remain in the presentation. **Deadline to submit photos is December 2, 2017.**



All questions can be directed to Lucille at 401-231-9229 or lcvalliere49@gmail.com or Sheila at 401-272-6267 or sheilac252@cox.net. We look forward to seeing you December 10th for this special event.

Candle Lighting Donations

If you would like to make a donation specifically to support the Candle Lighting service, please contact Lucille at 401-231-9229 or lcvalliere49@gmail.com. Your donation will be gratefully acknowledged in memory of your child in the program and the next newsletter.

Annual Newsletter Subscriptions

Recently you received in the mail a notice about continuing your subscription to the TCF Newsletter. There's still time to respond! Please send the form back to Lucille along with your \$10 contribution to help offset the costs of producing and mailing the newsletter.

Winter Parking Info

If there is a parking ban due to winter weather in Providence that falls on our meeting night, the meeting will be cancelled. Please check our website, Facebook page and a flash email will go out to all members.



Birthday Remembrances

We celebrate the day they were born and hold them in our hearts forever.

November

Caitlyn Marie Adler
Joseph Allard
Michael Barry
Steven Joseph Caito
Dante Cappelli
Anne & John D'Ercole
Madelyn Getter
Todd M. Hallworth
Frederick Hoard
Michael Latraverse
Dino Ludovici
Christopher J. Meehan
Emily Otrando
Nicholas Pizetoski
Marrina A. Yeomans

December

Tom Argentieri
Abby Aukerman
Alison Bowman
Henry Clemence
Anthony Colli
Jon Converse
Matthew Erwin
Erika Hall
Nichole LoDico
Charles McMahon
Erin Noble
Joseph A. Pari
Hayley Sanford
Kyle Saunders
Jeffrey Swanson
Diana Clavin Vallee
Samantha Walsh
Beau Wennermark

January

Matthew A. Cardillo
Luigi Civitelli
Christine Grinavic
Jamie Mayer
Nathan Daniel Medeiros
Jason G. Naylor
Martha Noble
Lorie Okerholm
Arthur Pelliccia
Marc Daniel Pinzon
Alexander Gonsalves Veiga
Karen Michelle Young
Amy Zimmerman Duggan

In Memory of Our Children

As long as we live, our children too shall live, for they are part of us in our memories. We lovingly remember the following children on Their Anniversary.

November

Angelo Argentieri
Brandi Lyn Burgess
Robert Carmone
Jon Converse
Anne & John D'Ercole
Rebecca Greene
Todd M. Hallworth
Rebecca Hopkins
John Anthony Koczan
Dino Ludovici
Shane Mandeville
Charles McMahon
John Taglione
Alexander Gonsalves Veiga

December

Travis Battle
Steven Joseph Caito
Louie Capadilupo
Henry Clemence
Matthew George Iavarone
Alan T. Lemay
Michael V. Medeiros
Michael Pelliccia
Nicole M. Reinert
Rose Block Shatz
Jasper Williams
Chad Allan Woodsom

January

Christopher Ancone
Amy Zimmerman Duggan
Christopher Higgins
Nicole LoDico
Nathan Daniel Medeiros
Nicholas Messier
Kevin Munroe
Brian Squadrito
Diana Clavin Vallee
Karen Michelle Young



Paint Night Fundraiser a Big Success!

Thank you to everyone who came out for a great night of creativity with wine and friends! We raised over \$800 for our Chapter.



Some of the most
comforting words in the
universe are 'me too.' That
moment when you find out
that your struggle is also
someone else's struggle,
that you're not alone, and
that others have been
down the same road.



- Rita Ghatourey

Koczan Holiday Tree at Slater Park

The Koczan family is once again inviting all Chapter members to help decorate their family tree at Slater Park in memory of their son John Anthony Koczan and all the Angels of the Compassionate Friends. The decorating will be **November 30th at 1 p.m.** at Slater Park in Pawtucket. If you have an ornament with a picture of your child, you may bring it to the park on the day of the event. If you have any questions, please call Betty Koczan at (401) 438-1320.



Gifts & Remembrance Garden Love Gifts

A Love Gift is a living memorial to your child. Usually given on birthdays, anniversaries of their deaths, holidays, or just to remember. Our thanks to the following for their generous donations.

Stephen Leach – You are missed everyday no matter where we live. Miss your smile and hugs. Love Mom and Paul

Robbie Carmone – Forever in our Hearts

Cody Johns Craynock – Forever in my Heart, Dad

Mary Elaine Ackaway – Love, Mom

Joseph Allard – We Love You and Miss You now and forever, Mom and Dad

Gina Marie Pontarelli – Love You, Miss You, Mom and Dad

Dale Marie Erickson – One never accepts the loss of a child, you learn to live with it. Love, Mom

Angela Sbardella – Love and Miss you, Auntie Nettie

Angela Sbardella – Forever in my Heart, Love Dad

Justin Daniel Walks – Love, Mom

Luigi Civitelli – Forever Missed and Loved, Mom and Dad

Luigi Civitelli – Love, Auntie Maria

Todd M. Hallworth – Love and remembered always, Love, Mom and Dad

Joseph A Pari – Forever in my Heart, Love Mom

Beau Wennermark – Forever Missed and Loved, Mom and Dad

Christopher Boone – Love Always

Caitlyn Marie Adler – Forever Missed and Loved, Mom and Dad

Anthony Stephen Casale – Forever in our Hearts, Love, Mom and Dad

Keeley Lynch – Love, Mom

David W. Greenwood – “Death Leave a heartache no one can heal, Love a memory no one can steal.”

On your 5 year remembrance. Love, Mom and Dad

We would like to give special recognition to Diane and John Lang who had a fundraiser in memory of their son Brian for his first anniversary and birthday. They generously donated \$2,500 to our Chapter. Thank you!

Thank You for your donations in memory of Our Children.

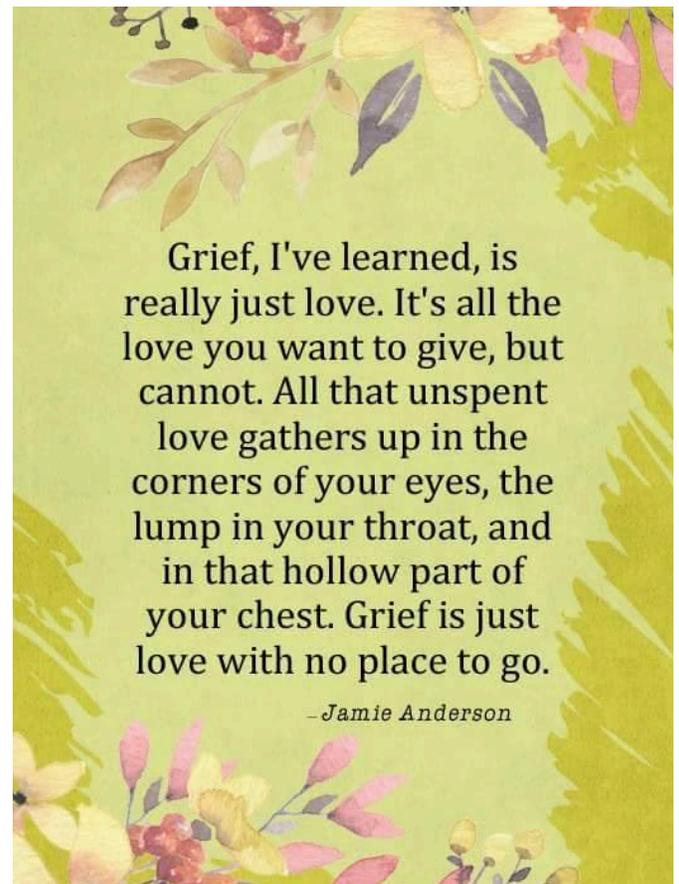


Holiday Shopping Reminder: Support TCF with Amazon Smile!

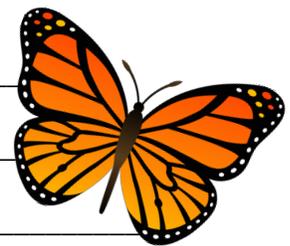
If you are doing any holiday shopping on Amazon, this year, please consider using **AmazonSmile** to benefit our Chapter. This is an easy way for you to support our Chapter every time you shop on Amazon—at no cost to you. Here's how:

- Go to **smile.amazon.com**
- Search for "The Compassionate Friends Greater Providence Chapter" as your charity.
- Shop as you normally would, finding the exact same prices and selection as on Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to our Chapter.
- Remember, you need to start each shopping session at the AmazonSmile URL: **smile.amazon.com**.

To learn more about how AmazonSmile works, go to **smile.amazon.com/about** to read the FAQs. Thank you!



Love Gift Donation



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

In Loving Memory Of _____

Love Gift \$ _____ Message _____

I would like my Love Gift to go toward (please check one):

- General Chapter expenses Upkeep of our Remembrance Garden

Your tax-deductible donation provides help for those who are grieving. General Chapter expenses helps defray the cost for the newsletter, postage, and other Chapter expenses. Upkeep of our Remembrance Garden goes toward lawn care and garden maintenance. Your donation is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Please make your check payable to: **TCF Greater Providence Chapter**.

Please send donations to: Co-Leader Lucille Valliere
10 Dail Drive
North Providence, RI 02911



The Compassionate Friends

Greater Providence Area Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

10 Dail Drive
North Providence, RI 02911
tcfprovidence.com



Upcoming Events

Our regular support group meetings take place on the second Monday of each month. All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Congregational Church, 296 Angell St., Providence, RI.

- **Sunday, December 10, 2017 – Annual Candle Lighting Ceremony, 6 p.m.**
- **January 8, 2018**
- **February 12, 2018**
- **March 12, 2018**

Note: There will be no meeting in December.

