



The Compassionate Friends

Greater Providence Area Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Holiday 2018

In Loving Memory: Donald Anthony Capasso

Donald was born on February 25, 1985, a happy baby who grew into a wonderful son and brother to his sisters and a good friend to so many. But that changed on August 14, 2003 at 10:00 pm when Donald took his last breath, from an autoimmune disease called Dermatomyositis. He developed breathing problems in early June that year and by August he was gone and our lives were forever changed.

At first I thought this could not be real he would come home and we would all wake from this horrible dream, I left his shoes at the door, I would imagine he was out with friends, or he was away at college; this could not be real. Soon I realized it was real; what next, how can I live? We had other children, Tara (21) and Alyssa (11). They were devastated and I was numb. It was all I could do to dress for the day. I remember my husband leaving for work, the girls going to school, and I would sit all day waiting.

Then a friend, Lucille Valliere, called. She had lost her son Chris in May and she told me about this group she and her husband Paul were going to called The Compassionate Friends. I told her I would think about it. The holidays came and went and my husband and I decided to go to a meeting. We walked through the door and saw others who told their stories of loss, 1 year, 5 years, and 15 years. How can this be, so many people, so many stories. I left thinking, how could God let this happen? I was so angry. Was I like these people? Soon I realized that I was and this was a safe place that I could share my story.

I began going to monthly meetings, my husband decided it wasn't for him. Each month I waited for

the second Monday to talk about Donald and listen to the stories of others. I realized I was not alone; I was like the others who had lost their precious children. I had learned ways from others further along in their grief how they were surviving. And those first years were about surviving. I would

listen and come home and tell my husband what others were doing. It was amazing how we were all so different, but so alike.

Over the years I learned that through sharing, I kept Donald's spirit alive. Over the last 15 years I have shared my silly stories hoping that by sharing it would give others hope—the hope I was given from the parents that were in the room when I needed help.

There is not a day that I don't think of Donald, and all that he has missed out on in life. I can

talk about him with a smile and the tears are controllable after all these years. I can tell his stories; I am reminded of what a loving brother he was, and a good friend to so many by the love that they have shown us over the years.

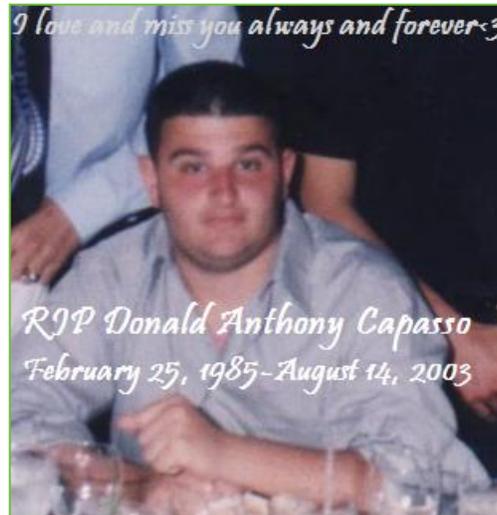
People ask "How do you do it"? I can't really give a simple answer to this question. I do know that for me, time has changed the pain, but never the loss. Today the happy memories are in my mind more than the day he left. Donald taught me a lot about life, I know he is with me every day just

not in the way I had planned.

I want to say Thank You to The Compassionate Friends for giving me hope. I hope I have done the same.

—With Love,

Sheila



Holiday Note from Your Chapter Leaders

Dear friends, as the holidays approach, we know the pain of being without our children, especially around this time of year. The longing for our children intensifies. The whole world seems consumed with tinsel and glitter, but those who grieve are only aware of the terrible hole in their hearts and in their lives. This time of year used to be a joyous time, but now it can be a horrendous time for bereaved parents. No matter what the holiday or special occasion, we notice the empty chair. We want you to know that we are here to help you through this journey; we walk together as Compassionate Friends.

Having a support group to share your anxieties about these stressful events can be helpful. Listening to others who are further down the path share their experiences, we talk about traditions and family gatherings. Sharing with the group has gotten us through many holidays and given us strength and healing from having passed through another event. Each passing event tells us that we can survive.

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

Lucille and Sheila

The First Chanukah

The first year of Chanukah was extremely difficult. Linda died on February 1st so by the time Chanukah arrived; the shock and numbness had disappeared. We could no longer pretend that she was on a business trip or visiting friends. We knew that she wasn't coming back.

Chanukah had been an important part of our family life. In addition to the lighting of the candles, we had created our own traditions and rituals. Chanukah is mostly a children's holiday but my family continued these observances when my daughters became adults. The tear streamed down my face as I lit the ritual candles that first year. We decided to discontinue the parties, singing, special foods, and all of our other observances. They were too painful.



We've become snowbirds and spend Chanukah in Florida. I still light the candles – usually by myself – but otherwise keep the holiday very low key and skip the rest of the festivities. Since I don't have young children or grandchildren to think about, this doesn't create any problems. There's always a pang, but it has softened over the years. As a veteran bereaved parent, I am resigned to the fact that I will never celebrate with my entire family again.

Therefore, I didn't expect the eight year of Chanukah to be unusual. I thought I had come to terms with the holiday. So why was the eight so difficult? Was it the fact that the eight anniversary was approaching? Was it the symbolism of eight nights of candles and eight years? Or was it just a coincidence or the blind siding that sometimes occurs without warning to those who have grieved for a long time? I probably will never know the answer and have decided that, as with many other things, it just the grief is. I'm just glad that, after eight years, the grief and pain usually are softer than they were in the early years.

—Stephanie Hesse, TCF NY



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
Dino Ludovici
Christopher J. Meehan
Emily Otrando
Nicholas Pizetoski
Marrina A. Yeomans

December

Abby Aukerman
Alison Bowman
Kyle Cabral
Henry Clemence
Jon Converse
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
Jason G. Naylor
Martha Noble
Lorie Okerholm
Arthur Pelliccia
Marc Daniel Pinzon
Daniel John Quigley
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 James 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

Tom Orazio Argentieri, Jr.
Travis Battle
Steven Joseph Caito
Louie Capadilupo
Henry Clemence
Daniel Reid Cornell
Christine Duclos
Matthew George Iavarone
Alan T. Lemay
Michael V. Medeiros
Craig Robert Nogler
Michael Pelliccia
Nicole M. Reinert
Rose Block Shatz
Alex Valicenti
Jasper Williams

January

Christopher Ancone
Rachel Elizabeth Carson
Lawrence D'Arezzo
Amy Zimmerman Duggan
Nicole LoDico
Nicholas Messier
Kevin Munroe
Daniel John Quigley
Brian Squadrito
Diana Clavin Vallee
Karen Michelle Young



Join us for the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting, Sunday, December 9, 2018

We will take part in our annual **Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, December 9, 2018 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 November 26, 2018.**

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 9th for this special event.



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all
children who have died

**Worldwide
Candle
Lighting®**

*... that their light
may always shine.*

**Sunday, December 9, 2018
7 PM Around the Globe**



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 acknowledge in memory of your child in the program and the next newsletter. **Donations must be submitted by December 2, 2018.**



Winter Parking Info

If there is a parking ban in Providence that falls on our meeting night, the meeting will be cancelled. Please check our website at tcfprovidence.com or the TCF Providence Facebook page. You can also check local news outlets or RIBroadcasters.com.

Winter Memories

The days are getting colder,
and the first snow's not too far off.

It used to be so pretty
gently falling from aloft.

But the snow won't be as pretty,
as it gathers on the ground,
'cause there'll be a snowman missing,
my son is not around.

The playing children's laughter,
used to be a special song,
but this year will be different,
without my son to sing along.

The song has lost its music,
and it'll be just another day,
as I gaze down from my window
and watch the children play.

But the snow will again be pretty,
in a far off distant time,
and we'll build snowmen together
and we'll never look behind.

For now, I'll remain with memories,
and the melting snow will fade,
but he builds snowmen to his heart's
content,
because he now lives where snow is made.

—Jeremiah Sundown
TCF Nashville, TN



First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.
Yet the world is singing round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor
and brave the sights and sounds,
a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,
look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.
And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down, through me.

—Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from *Stars in the Deepest – After the
Death of a Child*



Thank you, Sheila!

Sheila Capasso has decided to step down from her role as co-chapter leader for our Chapter, following this year's annual Worldwide Candle Lighting service on December 9th. We are grateful to Sheila for serving in this important role for more than 11 years, and we will miss her! Sheila will continue to be on the TCF Steering Committee.



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.

Donald Anthony Capasso – Forever in our Hearts, Love Mom and Dad

Jay Gerald Lawrence – Forever in our Hearts, Mom and Dad

John Winterhalter – Always remembered, from your Aunt Donna

John Carmone – Forever Loved

Daniel Coleman – Always Remembered, Mom

Gabrielle Dinsmore – Love and Missed Always, Mom and Dad

Angelina Angelone – We Love You and Miss You, Mom and Dad

Bella DiPalma – Forever in our heart, Dean Scanlon

Jackson Weintraub – I Miss You, Dad

Allan Tracy III – Love, Grandma

Matthew George Iavarone – Today and Forever in our hearts, Love Dad, Mom & Kenny

Todd M. Hallworth – Love and Remembered Always, Love, Mom and Dad

Christopher Boone – Miss and loving you more every day

Tyler Williams – Champ I Miss you with all my Heart, Dad

Martha Noble – Love and Miss you Always, Mom

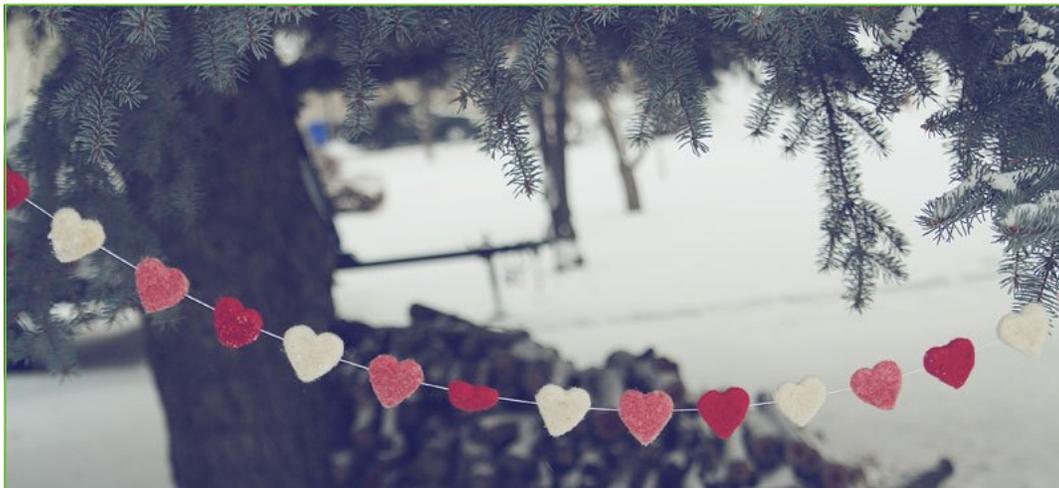
Mark Allen Higham – Forever in our Heart

Tyler Williams – Always Remembered, Kevin Barry

Anthony D'Arezzo, Lawrence D'Arrezzo, and Desire Joyce – Love Always and never Forgotten

Gregory "Josh" Montigny and Joseph Allard – Always remembered, Susan LaPerriere

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!



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 29th 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.



Love Gift Donation

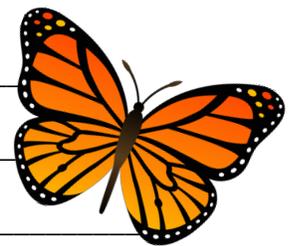
Name _____

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 9, 2018 – Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony, 6 p.m.
- January 14, 2019
- February 11, 2019
- March 11, 2019

Note: There will be no regular meeting in December.

