



## When Is It Okay?

by Terri

A recently bereaved parent said to me the other night, "I laughed today and I felt guilty." His son was needlessly murdered just a short six months ago because the cash register his son was responsible for held no more than \$20. I didn't know quite how to answer him. My son was murdered just over two years ago and I still occasionally feel guilt when I revel in the joy of being in love, or the beautiful sunset, or laugh with new friends, or chuckle at one of the myriad of jokes my son's friends and I tell about him.

Because I laugh and joke and tease about what my son may or may not be doing now, others are sometimes appalled at what they perceive as my lack of respect for those no longer with us. I long ago stopped trying to explain that it is not a lack of respect for my son or anyone else. It is rather a stubborn refusal to become defined by death and an acknowledgment that my son would be making the same irreverent jokes about me. Laughter is healthy. Humor is therapy. They are simply another coping mechanism. Some days I cannot stop crying—not necessarily on birthdays that no longer are or death days that loom. I have no idea why. Some days I can't cry—even on those non-birthdays or horrid anniversaries. There is simply no rhyme or reason to it, just as there is no rhyme or reason to why we have to outlive our children.



When is it all right to cry? Whenever we feel like it. When is it all right to smile and laugh? Whenever we feel like it. When is it all right to feel guilty because we cry or laugh—never!!! We cry because we hurt, because we are human, because we love and miss our children. If we start crying in the middle of a grocery store because we see a special on his/her favorite cereal, so what? *I don't know about others, but I am long past caring what strangers think.* We laugh because we can sometimes see through the dark clouds and

remember our children's laughter. We laugh when we remember the silly things they used to do. We laugh because we can hear their voices saying, "MOMMM, you're embarrassing me again." We laugh because our children taught us how and because they would never forgive us if we stopped laughing and enjoying life.

I miss my son terribly. I will always miss my son terribly. I would gladly trade my life for his, if I had that choice. When I laugh,

it does not mean I miss him less than others miss their children. When I smile at simple joys like thunderstorms, it does not mean I am "in denial" about my son's death. When I cry, it does not mean I am no longer coping. Never be afraid to express your emotions. Never feel guilty over finding humor or joy. After all, losing a child means never again having to say you're sorry for anything you do.

*Terri's son and only child, Patrick, was murdered in Mexico in May of 1996 at the age of 22.*



## Birthday Remembrances

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

### December

Joshua Anekea  
Abby Aukerman  
Taniya Bonilla  
Alison Bowman  
Kyle Cabral  
Henry Clemence  
Jon Converse

Easton DeResta  
Erika Hall  
Donna Lamb  
Benjamin Lavigne  
Nichole LoDico  
Charles McMahon  
Erin Noble

Joseph A. Pari  
Kyle Saunders  
Jeffrey Swanson  
Diana Clavin Vallee  
Samantha Walsh  
Beau Wennermark

### January

Matthew A. Cardillo  
Luigi Civitelli  
Dwight Furey  
Christine Grinavic  
Jamie Mayer

Jason G. Naylor  
Martha Noble  
Arthur Pelliccia  
Marc Daniel Pinzon  
Daniel John Quigley

Dan Schnebly  
Alexander Gonsalves Veiga  
David Gillen Witham  
Karen Michelle Young  
Amy Zimmerman Duggan

### February

Elizabeth Thomas Argentieri  
Matthew Arsenault  
Michael Bradley  
Donald Anthony Capasso  
Daniel John Coleman  
PFC Kyle Joseph Coutu  
Gary E. DeMoura

Matthew George Iavarone  
Ronan David Jordan  
John Anthony Koczan  
Jay Lawrence  
Jennifer Leigh Lesperance  
Shane Mandeville  
Ashley Miller

Michael Pelliccia  
Jennifer Lynn Peterson  
Brent Douglas Sheldon  
Emma Elizabeth Soares  
Sam Oliver Stein  
Jonathan Blake Waxler  
Rebeckha Lynn Whitefield

### March

Angelo James Argentieri  
Tom Orazio Argentieri Jr.  
Linda Marie Caito  
Peter Collins  
Alexandria M. Curtis  
Rebecca Eisen  
Servulo J. Gonsalves

Rebecca Greene  
Thomas P. Kenney  
Thomas P. Lewis  
Jeffrey S. Monica  
Lauren Rose Norwood  
Brendan Matthew O'Connell  
Roberti

Nicole M. Reinert  
Alexandria M. Saker  
Patricia Lynn Salera  
Angela Rose Sbardella  
Deborah Lee Serafin  
Jeffrey Stephen Shank  
Julianne Smith

## 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.*



### December

Tom Orazio Argentieri, Jr.  
Travis Battle  
Steven Joseph Caito  
Louie Capadilupo  
Christine McKay Chabot  
Henry Clemence

Daniel Reid Cornell  
Karen M. Corrao  
Easton DeResta  
Matthew George Iavarone  
Michael V. Medeiros  
Michael Pelliccia

Nicole M. Reinert  
Rose Block Shatz  
Alex Valicenti  
David Gillen Witham

### January

Jeffry Berg  
Lawrence D'Arezzo  
Amy Zimmerman Duggan  
Nicole LoDico  
Nicholas Messier

Kevin Munroe  
Charlie Nickels  
Katherine Paoletta  
Daniel John Quigley  
Alexandria M. Saker

Brian Squadrito  
Diana Clavin Vallee  
Karen Michelle Young

### February

Elizabeth Thomas Argentieri  
Christine Marie Bernier  
Derrick Blair  
Taniya Bonilla  
Christopher Robert Boone  
PFC Kyle Joseph Coutu

Gregory S. Earley  
Dwight Furey  
Donna Lamb  
Jay Lawrence  
Ashley Miller  
Lorie Okerholm

Jeffrey Stephen Shank  
Julianne Smith  
Craig Robert Valliere  
Samantha Walsh  
Conor Alexis Young

### March

Natalie Joy Adamo  
Melissa E. Allin  
Nicholas Baccari  
Linda Marie Caito  
Gabrielle Dinsmore  
Servulo J. Gonsalves

Stephen Hallisey  
Benjamin Lavigne  
Jennifer Leigh Lesperance  
Christopher J. Meehan  
Olivia Paone  
Monika Krystyna Prus

Brendan Matthew O'Connell  
Roberti  
Alfred "A.D." Silvia, III  
Beau Wennermark



## You're Never Far Away

by Bob Houghtaling

*Today I saw your picture  
Which came as a surprise  
For it's been an image  
Many times before my eyes  
But something in the moment  
Happened this spring day  
It filled me with a knowledge  
That you're never far away*

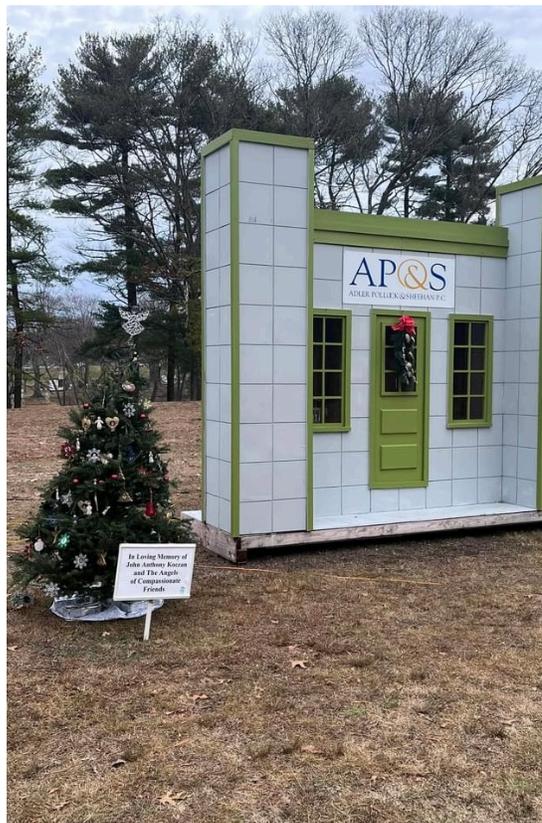
*Three years is a lifetime  
Three years is a blink  
You changed my life forever  
When I stop to think  
Sometimes it never happened  
Sometimes it seems too real  
This pain has touched senses  
And might never heal*

*But, there is great comfort  
Knowing you are in my life  
Elaine, your loving mother  
Would become my loving wife  
Miracles they often happened  
Nearly every single day*



## Koczan Christmas Tree at Slater Park

The Compassionate Friends would like to thank Betty and Steve Koczan who once again dedicated their family tree at Slater Park in memory of their son John Anthony Koczan and all the Angels of The Compassionate Friends.



## When Will I Heal?

By Sandy Fox

I often get asked after a parent has lost a child, "When will I heal from this unspeakable loss?" I knew I would never heal completely, but I searched for reasons to move on with my life until I found answers. No one has the same experience, not all people heal the same way or at the same time. You need to be patient with yourself and give yourself time to grieve, no matter how long it takes. You may feel better one day and the next feel worse. You may begin to go through the five steps of grief (shock, anger, withdrawal, acceptance and renewal) and find yourself making progress and then retreating backwards to the beginning. It may upset you, but know that it is normal for this to happen. For example, after getting over the initial shock and anger, you get to the withdrawal stage, and then find that one day you fall back to the beginning stage. It is like climbing a mountain, getting to a certain point and then your foot slips on a rock and you fall down to the starting area. But, what you would do then, you also do in grief. You start again up the mountain and try to reach the top. Just because you start again still doesn't mean you will get to our goal, but don't stop trying. When you reach a level where you can look back and say to yourself, "I've made it past that original starting point," keep going. It is not uncommon to fall into the crevice many times and your emotions may get the better of you then. It all looks insurmountable, but I can tell you that you will survive. One day a subtle shift occurs when you wake up. It is a beautiful morning, birds are singing, the sun is shining in the window and your spirits may soar. You know it will be a good day and you go from there. This process is



slow. It can take you three months, six months, even a year or two. But, time will be your friend and you will find that eventually you will feel a little better. This doesn't mean you are healed. You will never heal from the loss of a child, nor will you ever forget the child who brightened your life so much. You don't want to forget, and why should you? People may say to you, "It's been a year. You need to get over this. Forget about what happened." They don't understand; they have probably never had a loss this great. Your feelings may be hurt, but you need to tell them that you are doing the best you can and that even though it is a very bumpy road, you are slowly progressing and improving. Your memories of your child will keep you going, and it is okay to carry those memories with you for the rest of your life. For

myself, not a day goes by that I don't think of my daughter. When I am driving somewhere on a beautiful day, I often have to pull over to the side of the road because my grief overwhelms me. It has been twenty-one years, and I still get teary-eyed thinking of her and all the things she is missing and I

am missing by not being together. When I calm down, I continue on. You, too, will have overwhelming feelings at times, probably for the rest of your life. It is something we learn to live with and accept, for nothing will bring them back. I do know, though, she is in my heart now, and I will keep her there forever.

*Sandy has been a member of Alive Alone since her daughter died and is a regular presenter at national bereavement conferences. Marcy Jeanne Lewis, Sandy's daughter, lived for 27 ½ years and died in 1994 due to an auto accident.*

### Sponsor a Newsletter

We are pleased to offer our members the opportunity to sponsor a newsletter. We will feature your child's story and photo on the front page of our newsletter when you make a donation. This offers members another way to share their child with our group, as well as to help offset the cost of producing and mailing our newsletter. We are offering up to two sponsorships per newsletter. Your story can be any length up to 500 words and can include 1-3 photos. **If you would like to see your child featured in a future issue, please contact Lucille at (401) 231-9229 or [lcvalliere49@gmail.com](mailto:lcvalliere49@gmail.com).**

# LOVE 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.

**Nicholas C. Hendee** – In our hearts always, Mom, Norm and Sarah

**Justin Marron** – Holiday Remembrance, Love Mom

**Anthony Darezzo** – Forever Missed, Love Dad

**Bobby “Bo” Desmet** – My precious son, forever in my heart, love Mom

**Luigi Civitelli** – Merry Christmas in Heaven, Love Mom and Dad

**Luigi Civitelli** – Merry Christmas, Love Auntie Carmen

**Nathaniel Asselin** – Forever in our Hearts, Love Mom and Dad

**Matthew George Iavarone** – Always in our thought, forever in our Hearts, Love Mom and Dad

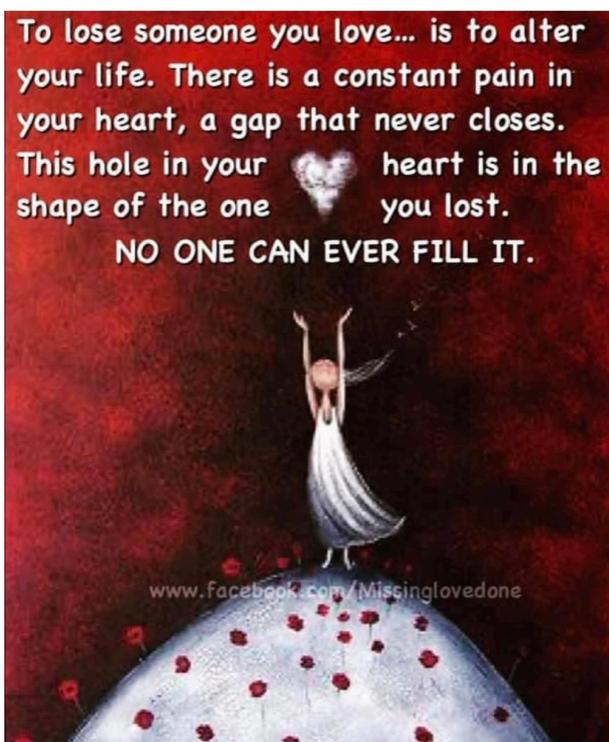
**Gregory Earley** – In Loving memory of my son.

**Thomas Lewis** – Forever in our Hearts, Love Mom and Dad

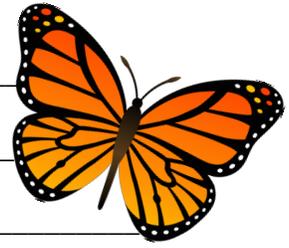
**Jonathan Blake Waxler** – In our hearts forever, Mom and Dad

**Anthony Stephen Casale** – Forever Missed, Love Mom and Dad

Thank You for your donations in memory of Our Children.



# Love Gift Donation



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory Of \_\_\_\_\_

Love Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Message \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like my Love Gift to go toward general Chapter expenses.

Your tax-deductible donation helps defray the costs for Chapter expenses. Your donation is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Please make your check payable to: **TCF Providence Chapter**.

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

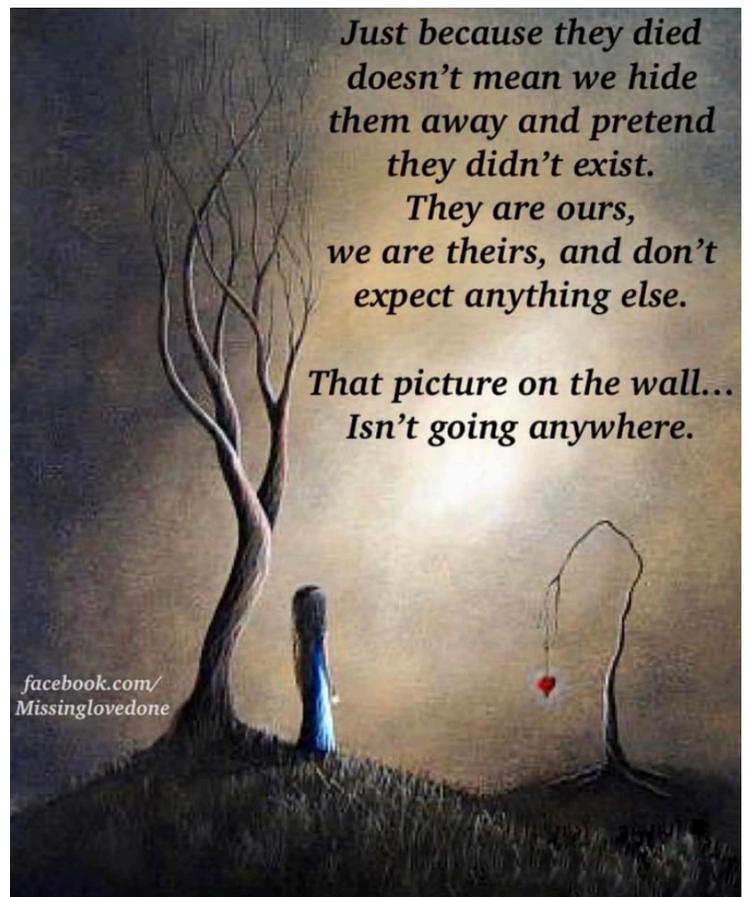
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## Shopping Reminder: Support TCF with Amazon Smile!

If you are doing any shopping on Amazon 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:  
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To learn more about how AmazonSmile works, go to **smile.amazon.com/about** to read the FAQs. Thank you!





**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Greater Providence Area Chapter  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

10 Dail Drive  
North Providence, RI 02911  
tcfprovidence.com



## Upcoming Events

All meetings take place on the second Monday of each month and begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Central Congregational Church, 296 Angell St. in Providence, RI. *Be sure to check the Meetings & Events page of our website for notices of any changes to our meeting schedule: [tcfprovidence.com](http://tcfprovidence.com).* Please note: New members can arrive early, between 6:15 and 6:30.

- **March 14**
- **April 11**
- **May 9**
- **June 13**
- **July 11**

