To control printing and postage costs, we are trying to go paperless– We are asking everyone to let us know if you can get the newsletter online. Please return your updated information form that you received last month, ASAP. (See pg. 16)

"This newsletter is sponsored by an anonymous family in memory of our children".

The March 4th meeting will start with “Helping Those Who Grieve”.

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Ken at (310) 544-6690.

TCF Lunch Group meets for lunch at Mimi’s Café every Friday at 1:00. (Crenshaw and PCH). All members are invited.

--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--
The March 4th topic will start with “Helping Those That Grieve”. When we are newly bereaved, we are in such a fog that we barely know who is there for us. If we have one or two close friends who support us, we may overlook all the other family members, friends, and acquaintances who took time from their lives to help in their own way. In early bereavement, our views are distorted, and quite frankly, we do not have the capabilities to remember much.

As time passes, we need to stop long enough to acknowledge those who helped. We will start this meeting with the focus on remembering the thoughtful things others did for us, before moving on to other subjects. This is a time to remember the small things we may have overlooked, but want our friends and family to know how much we appreciate. (Perhaps now would be a good time to tell them.) By sharing with each other, we may learn some special ways to reach out to other bereaved families in the future.

We will also be discussing “ways to find some of the support we need.” Bereaved parents change in the way they need support of family and friends as they progress in their grief. We will be discussing how we need to let others know of our changing needs and how they can help us as we move through the different stages of grief.

Helping Friends Who Grieve

Two years ago our daughter Kaitlyn, 18, was the victim of what police term a "random shooting". My husband, Don and I were summoned to the emergency room at midnight. Kait was in a coma. She didn't regain consciousness and died the next evening.

I have few clear memories of the 24 hours that Kait clung to life, but I do remember we were not alone. One friend arrived with a sack of quarters so we could make calls from the pay phone. Others met our out-of-town children at the airport and drove them to the hospital. A neighbor took care of the dog.

Until the loss of our daughter, I didn't know how to act when confronted with tragedy. Afraid to do more harm than good, I held myself at arm's length when friends were hurting. I sent cards and flowers, telling myself they knew I was available if they wanted me. Nobody ever called to say I was needed.

I realize now that people in crisis need others around them. It's better to do something klutzy than do nothing, and the kindest words are often the simplest.

Now, I take the initiative. Your friend may be suffering too much to know what he or she needs. The first person to arrive on our doorstep after Kait died was a recent widow still adjusting to her own loss. She took one look at our faces, then loaded us into her car to shop for a cemetery plot. Other friends took over our phone and answered the door. One neighbor mowed our lawn; another put up incoming relatives.

Write a letter of condolence. Store bought cards don't take the place of a personal letter, no matter how short or awkwardly worded. Every member of our family has drawn strength from the sympathy letters we received. The most meaningful letters described happy memories.

Those letters told us not only that people cared, but that Kait's life - though short - had affected the lives of others.

Be there to listen. Your presence and your willingness to listen are the two most precious gifts you can offer. The people we found most comforting made no attempt to distract us from our grief. Instead, they encouraged Don and me to describe each excruciating detail of our nightmare experience over and over. That repetition diffused the intensity of our agony and made it possible for us to start healing. Working through grief is a long, slow process. What helps is the little things - replenishing groceries, cashing checks, returning library books. Most of all, caring enough to help others bear the unbearable.

We've come a long way - thanks to the help of our friends.

--Excerpts from a Womans Day article by Lois Duncan.

Some Ways to Help a Grieving Spouse

* Assign top priority to your marriage relationship.
* Cultivate transparency, openness, and honesty.
* Accept the pain that you feel. Be willing to share it and to listen to your spouse's expression of the pain he or she is feeling.
* Be patient with your spouse and with yourself. Recognize that your spouse is probably not at the same place in the grief process as you, and that is okay.
* Don't expect your spouse to be your only
source of healing.
* Keep working at communicating. Give special attention to your affection for each other. Learn and practice the gestures of love. Remember to stay in touch physically; the importance of human touching and hugging is hard to over estimate.
* Allow or create space in your relationship. Everyone is entitled to a degree of privacy with their feelings, including their grief.
* Allow yourselves to enjoy life and each other. Be willing to laugh together, as well as to cry together. Work at finding some fun things to do together.
* Help each other to remember that life is more than this child who has died. As important as this child is to you and as much as you feel pain over his or her death, your marriage relationship involves far more than this child.

--Howard Cupp, TCF State Conference, Norman, OK

The After Loss Credo

I need to talk about my loss. I may often need to ask you what happened or to ask you why it happened. Each time I discuss my loss I am helping myself face the reality of the death of my loved one. I need to know that you care about me. I need to feel your touch, your hugs. I need you to just be "with me. (And I need to be with you.) I need to know you believe in me and in my ability to get through my grief in my own way. (And in my own time.) Please don't judge me now or think I'm behaving strangely. Remember I'm grieving. I may even be in shock. I may feel afraid. I may feel deep rage. I may even feel guilty. But above all, I hurt.

I'm experiencing a pain unlike any I've ever felt before. Don't worry if you think I'm getting better, and then suddenly I seem to slip backward. Grief makes me behave this way at times. And please don't tell me you know "how I feel", or that it's time for me to get on with my life. (I am probably already saying that to myself.) What I need now is time to grieve and recover. Most of all, thank you for being my friend. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for caring. Thank you for helping, for understanding. Thank you for praying for me. And remember, in the days or years ahead, after your loss-when you need me as I have needed you, I will understand. And then I will come and be with you.

--Barbara Hills lecturing L.L.F. The TCF Newsletter of North Central, MA June 2005

Beatitudes For Those Who Comfort

Blessed are those who do not use tears to measure the true feeling of the bereaved.
Blessed are those who do not always have a quick "comforting" answer.
Blessed are those who do not make judgements on the bereaved's closeness to God by their reaction to the loss of their loved one.
Blessed are those who hear with their hearts and not with their minds.
Blessed are those who allow the bereaved enough time to heal.
Blessed are those who admit their uncomfortableness and put it aside to help the bereaved.
Blessed are those who do not give unwanted advice.
Blessed are those who continue to call, visit, and reach out when the crowd has dwindled and the wounded are left standing alone.
Blessed are those who know the worth of each person as a unique individual and do not pretend that they can be replaced or forgotten.
Blessed are those who realize the fragility of bereavement and handle it with an understanding shoulder and a loving heart.

--Jackie Deems Albany, NY TCF newsletter

The Gift of Grief

Death takes away. That's all there is to it. But Grief gives back. By experiencing it, we are not simply eroded by pain. Rather, we become larger human beings, more aware, more compassionate, and more able to help ourselves. Grief is a powerful alchemy. It plunges us into sorrow and forces us to face the finiteness of life, the mightiness of death, and the meaning of our existence on this earth. It does more than enable us to change; it demands it.

The way we change is up to you, and it is possible to be forever bowed by grief. But it is also possible to be enlarged, to find new direction, and to allow the memory of the beloved person we have lost to live on within us, not as a monument to misery but as a source of strength, love, and inspiration. By acting on our grief, we can eventually find ourselves a place of peace and purposefulness. It is my belief that all grievers, no matter how intense their pain, no matter how
Ten Things We Need to Know about Grief

1. Grief hurts – There is real pain.
2. Grief is Normal – The pain, anger, depression, numbness, guilt, mental confusion, etc. is all NORMAL. You are not going crazy if you experience these.
3. Grief Endures – It takes years for healing to occur.
4. People Grieve Differently – Everyone is an individual and does his/her grief work differently. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.
5. Physical Reactions –
   A. Loss of appetite or overeating;
   B. Insomnia - sleeplessness;
   C. Sleeping all the time - depression?
   D. Sexual difficulties - not wanting/deserving pleasure;
   E. Loss of energy - takes all you have to get out of bed;
   F. Difficulty concentrating;
   G. Physical ailments.
6. Grief brings tears - Crying is healthy. Men should cry, too!
7. Holidays, Anniversaries, Special Days Are Stressful. - Holidays are “family time” and are difficult when a child is absent.
8. Grief Causes One to Examine His/Her Philosophy of life. - We now question many religious principles we have always accepted in the past. Questioning God and His role in the loss is normal and okay. Being angry at God is okay. You can't be angry at someone you don't believe in! God hurts when we hurt.
9. Grief Changes You! - When your child dies, you will never be the person you were before! Don't be frightened by the changes taking place inside of you. You will eventually find your "resting place" as healing takes place.
10. Recovery and Healing is Possible! - You will never "get over" the death of a child, but you won't always hurt like you do initially.
   All attempts to avoid grief will only postpone it.

IT DOES GET BETTER!
--Chuck Prestwood, TCF, Jackson, MS
the renewals life offers. Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our life and go on.

We owe it to ourselves, Compassionate Friends, to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of Spring and put the "winter of our discontent" in its place... now a part of our ongoing lives.

-- TCF, Houston NW Chapter

The Heavy Heart

I awake in the middle of the night and in the stillness I become aware of a dull ache deep inside. As I am driving, dining in a restaurant, shopping in a crowded mall, I see a young man, familiar in one way or another - the thick, dark hair, the ambling stride, the tilt of his head - "Oh God, can it be? Oh please God, please let it be. But it is not so, and I am struck with a pain so sharp that tears spring into my eyes.

A pause in a conversation, a commercial on TV, a break in my train of thought, and suddenly I feel a vice-like pain across my chest and the terrible truth, momentarily forgotten, comes crashing down on me with a force that takes my breath away.

I am alone in my car, driving home, and my thoughts turn to Robert. An ache grows stronger and stronger inside until I can hardly bear it. As the garage door closes behind me, I put my head back against the seat and weep, hot tears pouring down my face.

What is this terrible ache that has been an ever-present part of my life since that dreadful day a year and a half ago when my son died, this pain that I somehow instinctively know will remain with me for the rest of my life? I have given it a name. I call it the heavy heart.

Why is the pain of this loss so different from other losses I have known – my parents, my grandmother? It is because the relationship we have with our children is uniquely different from any other. From the moment a child enters into our life, a place in our heart is reserved for him, a place that he is expected to fill for the rest of our life.

Through infancy, childhood, youth, middle age... this child has his special place that no one else can fill. And when the unthinkable happens and the child dies, the place which has been reserved in our life, in our heart, is suddenly vacant. It will remain vacant for the rest of our life. And we will always have a heavy heart.

Oh, there will be other loved ones, other joys. Our lives go on. But no matter how hard we try, the empty place will always be there and with it the heavy heart. But I know and I believe to the very depths of my soul that when my days on this earth come to an end, and Robert and I have our joyous reunion, at that moment I will no longer have my heavy heart.

--Carole Ragland TCF, Houston West, TX

Suicide

If you meet me, friend, and wonder why A tear is always in my eye, It's because I suffered the greatest loss. Yes, mine has been a heavy cross

My first thought every morning My last thought every night, And every moment in between Somehow it doesn't seem right

Why one so loved and cherished Should make the choice to die, I curse that medication. And ask my Savior why

Part of my heart went with him, I struggle day by day To solve this life as best I can, Yet wonder why I stay

Many here still love me And I them in return, But for this link - my special son I will forever yearn.

The day will come - we'll meet again. This will be in the past For even death cannot conquer love. It will forever last.

--Mary MacDonald TCF, Manitoba

Love: An Everlasting Bond

by The Rev. Al Miles

Among the numerous blessings I've received from bereaved parents down through the years is having the privilege to witness their unending love
for daughters and sons who have died.

While many well-meaning family members, friends, and professionals encourage grief-stricken fathers and mothers to "get over" sorrow and "move on" (which unwittingly devalues the life of a deceased child and the love of mournful fathers and mothers by suggesting the child be forgotten), the parents themselves understand completely that love never dies.

This eternal affection is clearly expressed in a passage found in the Christian scriptures, one that I'm frequently asked by parents to recite following the death of their daughters and sons: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creations, will be able to separate us from the love of God ..." Romans 8:38-39]

Intrinsically, parents realize that no adversity - not even death itself - can take away or diminish the love they have for their children. This truth is vividly illustrated by the thousands of fathers, mothers, and family members who participate in candlelight vigils, memorial walks, and other ceremonies held annually across the United States in honor of children who have died.

The reality of love being an everlasting bond is also revealed in the countless stories grieving parents share. Over the past 22 years I've had the opportunity to hear hundreds of these tales. Let's take a closer look at one such story. It focuses on a child who only lived a few hours outside of his mother's womb.

Brenda and her husband Gerald wore huge smiles as they entered my office on that blustery and frigid Minnesota morning a dozen or so years ago. "Rev. AI," Brenda said excitedly, using the endearing term she always called me, "Gerald and I are going to have a baby!"

I was thrilled by the news. Brenda worked as a nurse in the same children's hospital where I was at the time serving as the director of pastoral care. She visited my office regularly, requesting prayers that God would allow her to become pregnant. It took more than a year for the couple to conceive. The time was a frustrating and often sad one for both Brenda and Gerald. "We spent many nights holding one another and crying ourselves to sleep," Brenda once told me. "The greatest fear we harbor is that our dream of having a child of our own might never come true." Thus, the wintry morning Brenda and Gerald told me of their good news was especially sweet.

"Gerry and I want you, Rev. Al, to be the first person to know about our impending parenthood," Brenda expressed with jubilation. "Your counsel and prayers gave us hope, even in our darkest hours. When our daughter or son is born we want you to baptize them." I was humbled by Brenda's words of praise and was honored that she and Gerald were requesting me to baptize their child. I accepted the offer. The holy sacrament however, was to occur far sooner than Brenda, Gerald, and I had hoped.

Twenty four weeks into her pregnancy, Brenda was given medication and placed on total bed rest. Her obstetrician worried that she would go into premature labor. Despite these precautionary measures, Brenda gave birth to a son six days later. She and Gerald named their child Benjamin.

The infant was taken immediately to the hospital's newborn intensive care unit. He was placed on a respirator. Physicians told Brenda that if Benjamin survived at all, he'd face an uphill battle. The parents contacted me, and I baptized Benjamin that very evening. Within an hour, the little baby died.

In the midst of overwhelming sadness, Brenda and Gerald expressed deep love for their deceased son. They responded positively to suggestions made by members of the hospital's health care team to spend time holding Benjamin, and having photographs taken with him. The grief-stricken parents also appreciated the tiny footprints of their son, which were made by Benjamin's nurse.

The following week, I officiated at Benjamin's funeral service, which was held in the hospital's chapel. More than 75 people - family members, friends, and professionals - crowded into a space that had a maximum seating capacity of fifty.

Support for the couple in the midst of their intense grief was strong. Unfortunately, following the service, many people attempted to quickly move Brenda and Gerald past their sorrow. The couple told me two phrases that hurt the most: "God never gives you more than you can handle," and "You two are young; you
can have other children."

The parents understood people were trying to be helpful. "They all love us," Brenda told me a month after her son's death. "But, instructing Gerald and me to 'move on' makes it seem that, to them, Benjamin's life and death didn't mean a thing. We are trying to move on, but we refuse to leave our son behind."

Brenda and Gerald have never left Benjamin behind. In the 12 years since their son's death, the couple have conceived two more children. I still hear from them every Christmas. Each card is signed Love, Brenda, Gerald, Maggie, Terry, and Benjamin.

Love is an everlasting bond. It is therefore vital for friends, family members, and professionals to allow parents who experience the death of a daughter or son to continue to express their love in all the ways they desire.

--The Rev. AI Miles coordinates the hospital ministry department at The Queen's Medical Center for Pacific Health Ministry.

For Friends and Family ...

The Storms of Grief

When I grieve in your presence,
I open a window to my soul.
The Turbulence,
The Thrashing,
The Tears,
The bitterness will not destroy me.
Unless they are forced inside.
Help me get the pain out
By being patient,
By showing me with your eyes
That you'll weather the storm.
Please do not say too much,
Just let me be.
I'll show you the way.
Then, please feel important
When I can laugh and play again
For you are a catalyst
In my learning to live again.
- Elizabeth Farnsworth, TCF, Lynchburg, VA

Newly Bereaved...

Tools

SPEAK YOUR GRIEF: Talking is like a sponge.... you slowly squeeze it out. Talking is painful. Not talking is more painful.

JOURNAL YOUR THOUGHTS: Talk on paper. Hold nothing back.

CRY: When we cry because of a broken heart the chemistry of these tears is different from other tears. Tears unshed cause other organs to weep.

MEDITATE: Give yourself space for total quiet time. Quiet meditation brings your blood pressure down, slows your breathing, and relieves feelings of panic. The quiet also brings down levels of cholesterol, blood glucose, and adrenaline.

PRAY... and ask someone to pray for you: This is a medically proven benefit.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE relieves built up energy: High intensity exercise, such as jogging and weight lifting, relieves severe feelings of depression and fatigue. Low intensity exercise, such as going for a walk, relieves "antsy" or "I just can't sit still" feelings.

ACCEPT LOVE and SUPPORT from people you trust: Easier said than done. We tend to build a wall and hang out a sign that says, "Just leave me alone. I'm all right."

NATURE is nurturing: Sit on a rock. Study the design of a weed, tree, or flower. Feel the breeze on your cheek, the sun that warms you, and the cool of the shade.

A GRIEF PARTNER is a good thing: This is someone you seek out and trust. Someone who can understand and accept you in your pit ... right where you are.

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE can be a valuable resource: It may be a place where you can find answers to some of your questions.

JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP where you can take off your mask and truly be yourself: Those who have walked the path of grief are willing to share their wisdom and give you a special kind of courage.

REST even if you cannot sleep: Watch your caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol intake. These chemicals can cause anxiety and make it impossible to sleep.

EXPRESS ANGER in ways that are not...
harmful to yourself or another person: Chop wood, run hard, pound nails, throw old dishes against the back of the garage wall, go into a canyon and scream.

GUILT is a normal feeling: Deep down we believe we should have been able to protect our child ... if I had only ... done this ... or not done that. Speak your feelings of guilt to another person, someone who is willing to hear your feelings. Remember ... feelings are not always facts.

HUMAN TOUCH is a very basic form of comfort: We live in a "high tech-low-touch" culture. Now you need a hug. It would even feel good to be rocked! When someone asks you if there is anything they can do for you, say, "Yes, I could use a gift certificate for a professional massage."

NUITRE YOURSELF: Sit in the warm sun when you feel cold. Wrap up in a soft warm blanket. Take a warm bath.

LISTEN: to soothing music which soothes your soul.

NUTRITION is essential for healing a broken heart: Avoid sugar, drink plenty of water, avoid spicy and greasy foods, make meals small and frequent. Take supplemental vitamins and minerals.

DEVELOP A HOBBY: If you already have a hobby, establish another one. Think of something you have always wanted to do, and begin to do.

LEARN RELAXATION TECHNIQUES: and take a few minutes every day to practice them. You will find some muscles are painfully tight and tense. We carry a lot of pressure in our necks and shoulders. --Alice Monroe, R.N., 2003 workshop, Atlanta, GA

Welcome ...

Safe Harbor

One thing we don’t want to do in Compassionate Friends is tell you how you should feel. What we want to do is give you a “safe harbor”— a place where whatever you are feeling is O.K. because we who have been where you are know that with time, the strange, weird, ugly feelings will pass.

We know that you are O.K. where you are now, whatever you are feeling. It’s natural and normal and a necessary part of our grief work to express our feelings - air them - get them out -and you can do it with us because we care.
We love you because we know your pain.
--Fay Harden, Tuscaloosa, AL

Editor’s Note: We invite you to join us at a meeting and see for yourself how beneficial it is to share your grief with other parents who understand the depths of pain involved. We meet the first Wed. of each month to resolve the many issues that arise following the death of a child. (There is also a small group that meets for lunch every Friday at 1:00 at Mimi’s Café in Torrance.) Come join us and see what a difference TCF can make.

Book Review ...

For some bereaved families, reading books on grief is beneficial. For others, their concentration level is such that they find it hard to read lengthy books. If you can’t summon up the energy for reading, TCF has several audio tapes from different workshops at bereavement conferences that you may find beneficial. You may check these out to listen to them at your convenience. Many insightful ideas are condensed into a tape, and all you have to do is listen.

For those of us who have been reading, if you have books you would like to pass on to our chapter, please bring them to the next meeting. Our library of grief materials is always fluctuating and we would welcome any additions you think would be helpful to other bereaved families.

Helpful Hint...

Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one. Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like a miser who never enjoys what he has, but only bewails what he loses. --Plutarch Greek Writer 48-125 A.D. Written on the death of his son who completed suicide.

There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart.
~ Mahatma Ghandi TCF Aurora CO newsletter
The Cord

We are connected,
My child and I,
By an invisible cord,
Not seen by the eye.
It's not like the cord
That connects us 'til birth
This cord can't be seen
By any on earth.
This cord does its work
Right from the start.
It binds us together
Attached to my heart.
I know that it's there
Though no one can see
The invisible cord
From my child to me.
The strength of this cord
Man could create
It withstands the test
Can hold any weight.
And though you are gone,
Though you're not here with me,
The cord is still there
But no one can see.
It pulls at my heart
I am bruised…. I am sore,
But this cord is my lifeline
As never before.
I am thankful that we
Are connected this way,
A mother and child
Death can't take away!
--Author Unknown

Intimacy

3:22 AM. I am awake again.
I think to reach out to him.
That’s what I used to do (before).
But something stays my hand.
First, I must wait for the
moisture on my eyes to dry.
And this swelling in my chest--
pounding, pounding.
Threatening to explode from within.
I think it might be my heart.
My stomach flips.
This is not desire;
It is grief.
A child we created together is dead.
Can I ever know pleasure again?"

4:19 AM. I want to reach for him.
But another thought is born-
“Can she see us?” I wonder.
I move to the dresser
And turn her picture around.
(Even though her eyes are closed.)
Then I hear his calling whisper.
“Honey? Are you okay?”
“Okay?”
I do not know what that is anymore.
I move into his comforting embrace.
Maybe, just maybe,
This will help ease his pain.
But not mine.
Not yet.
--Dana Gentler TCF, South Central Kentucky

Comparisons

It is useless to wonder
what grief is larger
or what grief is smaller.
The death of children
fills to ultimate endurance
every human dimension
for pain.
There is no need
to give rank to death.
We only have to recognize
that grief has filled a whole life
to its ultimate boundaries.
-- Sasha Wagner, Wintersun

Eyes Open Wide

I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream

The Compassionate Friends
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain

Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream
Grief so strong.
--Robert Wills TCF Frederick, MD
Our Children Remembered

Ron Acker
Born: 10/65 Died: 5/95
Mother: Ursula Spey-Acker
Father: Heinz H. Acker

Jonathan Adams
Born: 1/81 Died: 2/08
Parent: Siv & Eddie Adams

Ramon Alvarez
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/07
Mother: Terrie Alvarez

Sumer Nicole Alvarez
Born: 5/85 Died: 7/05
Parents: Dave Alvarez & Sandy Murphy

Noah William Aragon
Born: 1/05 Died: 3/06
Parents: Rich & Michele Aragon

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Joshua Arevalo
Born: 7/93 Died: 8/11
Mother: Vilma Alfaro

Joseph David Artino
Born: 11/51 Died: 11/07
Mother: Nancy Graybill
Step-father: Art Graybill

Jason M. Bakos
Born: 9/79 Died: 12/07
Father: James Bakos

Alexandra Renee Balesh
Born: 9/73 Died: 3/95
Parents: Ron & Stella Balesh

Kimberly Barcenas
Born: 2/88 Died: 10/06
Mother: Maria Guadalupe Ixta

Christopher Barnhart
Born: 11/77 Died: 4/07
Parents: Ron & Susan Mother
Sister: Stacy Pierce

Christopher Michael Barta
Born: 2/72 Died: 9/04
Mother: Mary Barta

Stephen Barrington Baxter
Parents: Cash & Betty Baxter

Vincent Beagle
Born: 11/82 Died: 5/10
Mother: Angela Beagle

Tristina Ann Beale
Born: 12/80 Died: 9/08
Mother: Kathy Beale

Kimberly Belluomini
Born: 10/62 Died: 10/00
Parents: Joyce Anderson & Ronald Assmann

Vincent Begele
Born: 11/82 Died: 5/10
Parents: Angela & Vincent Begele

Sammy Bloom
Born: 2/59 Died: 12/82
Parents: Lois & Sam Bloom

Kurt Boettcher
Born: 12/71 Died: 06/95
Mother: Carolyn Boettcher

Todd Boettcher
Born: 2/79 Died: 10/79
Mother: Carolyn Boettcher

Robert Bolde
Born: 7/94 Died: 9/12
Parents: Diane & Paul Bolde

Alan Bolton
Born: 11/63 Died: 3/06
Mother: Helen Eddens

Kevin Border
Born: 11/88 Died: 11/09
Mother: Kelly Border

Antoinette Botley
Born: 12/67 Died: 7/10
Mother: Freda McGrew

Renee Bouchard
Born: 3/75 Died: 5/06
Mother: Susan Bouchard

Michael Bowen
Born: 5/95 Died: 8/14
Mother: Tomas Richardson

Tamara Lynette Boyd
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/00
Parents: Gloria & Gayle Jones

Jazzelyn Braga
Born: 11/08 Died: 5/09
Father: Leonard Braga

Lawrence Tom Brennan
Born: 11/86 Died: 12/10
Parents: Manuel & Lisa Jo Hernandez

William Joseph Britton
Born: 3/62 Died: 7/85
Mother: Jean Anne Britton

Sayumi Claire Brower
Born: 9/08 Died: 9/08
Parents: Scott & Maiko Brower

Devon Leigh Brown
Born: 5/90 Died: 3/92
Mother: Heidi Brown

Eric Michael Brown
Born: 11/65 Died: 9/00
Mother: Beverly Young

Benjamin Matthew Brytan
Born: 10/84 Died: 6/96
Mother: Karen Merickel & Robert Brytan

Robert L. Buckner
Born: 2/92 Died: 3/03
Parents: Brad & Cindy Buckner

Scott Buehler
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/08
Mother: Elizabeth Buehler Miller

Brittany Nicole Cail
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/08
Mother: Raquel Cail

Albert Caldera
Born: 3/78 Died: 2/10
Parents: Refugio & Maria Caldera

Christina Califano
Born: 10/90 Died: 11/06
Father: John Califano

Cesar Isaac Cancino
Born: 01/05 Died: 01/05
Parents: Claudia & Cesar Cancino

Kenneth Capparelli
Born: 1/77 Died: 1/04
Mother: Sandy Capparelli

Kevin Castaneda
Born: 4/94 Died: 4/13
Parents: Fernando & Aleda Hokenberry

Frank Christopher Castania
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

Vanessa Roseann Castania
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

Ryan Cavanaugh
Born: 6/83 Died: 11/06
Mother: Kimberly Cavanaugh

Zackary Kenneth Charlton
Born: 11/81 Died: 3/10
Parents: Christine & Kerr
Sister: Allie Bentley

Nathaniel Choate
Born: 7/80 Died: 5/08
Mother: Vicki Blain

Andrew Alexander Chou
Born: 12/03 Died: 12/03
Parents: Lu-Sieng Siauw & Wibawa Chou

Michelle Christian
Born: 10/67 Died: 04/13
Parents: Paul & Toni Saben

Ophelia Grace Clark
Born: 10/82 Died: 9/10
Sister: Rebecca Clark

John Francis Cleary
Born: 12/74 Died: 8/93
Mother: Pauline Cleary Basil

Kelly Swan Cleary
Born: 3/59 Died: 3/95
Parents: Dick & Bev Swan

Sarah Elizabeth Cooper
Born: 10/95 Died: 8/00
Parents: Mark & Sandra Cooper

Father: Gary A. Diecy, Sr.
Our Children Remembered

Michael A. DiMaggio
Born: 10/54 Died: 7/01
Parents: Neno & Helen DiMaggio

Amy Elizabeth Dodd
Born: 1/74 Died: 7/02
Mother: Kathleen Dodd

Asa James Dolak
Born: 2/94 Died: 12/13
Mother: Andrea Dolak

Heidi Dominguez
Born: 8/68 Died: 6/13
Grandmother: Rita Menendez

Wayne Douglas
Born: 9/71 Died: 1/10
Mother: Marie Galli

Sierra Dove
Born: Died
Parents: Michelle & Mathew Dove

Ramsay Downie, II
Born: 2/64 Died: 10/99
Ramsay & Sally Downie

Joel Draper
Born: 1/84 Died: 5/04
Mother: Tracy Solis

Rachel Sheridan Dunlap
Born: 9/69 Died: 3/09
Mother: Janell Dunlap

Myaka Kaitana Durham
Born: 1/04/06 Died: 1/06
Parents: Jahman & Amy Durham

Scott Michael Dykstra
Born: 7/72 Died: 10/01
Parents: Mike & Rita Dykstra

Gary Edholm
Born: 5/56 Died: 9/95
Parents: Patti & Bob White

Mark Edler
Born: 11/73 Died: 1/92
Parents: Kitty & Rich Edler

Timothy Charles Egнатoff
Born: 11/92 Died: 9/08
Parents: Rick & Cathy Reny

Lorian Tamara Elbert
Born: 5/66 Died: 10/07
Mother: Dorota Starr Elbert

Luke Emery
Born: 7/89 Died: 12/99
Parents: Karen & Glenn Emery

Jeffery Mark Engleman
Born: 6/61 Died: 2/10
Parents: Janette & Laszlo Engleman

Richard Paul Engleman
Born: 92/66 Died: 03/95
Parents: Janette & Laszlo Engleman

Henry Espinoza
Born: 12/63 Died: 9/98
Mother: Virginia Espinoza

Kurt Faerber
Born: 8/63 Died: 3/87
Mother: Trudy Faerber

Jarod Ryan Faulk
Born: 8/86 Died: 12/08
Father: Joe Faulk

Chase Feldkamp
Born: 5/05 Died: 3/06
Parents: Buddy & Jessica Feldkamp

David Joseph Ferrale
Born: 2/74 Died: 12/02
Parents: John & Rebecca Ferrale

Michella Leanne Matasso
Fincannon
Born: 8/86 Died: 1/06
Parents: Bill & Cheryl Matasso

Emma Nicole Fisher
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06
Parents: Nancy & Elliott Fisher

Casey Owen Flint
Born: 5/75 Died: 7/09
Mother: Catherine Flint

April Lou Flyn
Born: 6/61 Died: 1/05
Mother: Peggy Flyn

Mark Fraz
Born: 5/79 Died: 7/07
Mother: Kathy Cammarano

Hunter Rebecca Bloom Freese
Born: 1/02 Died: 4/12
Parents: Brian & Michelle Freese

Donald A. Funk
Born: 12/41 Died: 9/00
Parents: William & Norma Jean Funk

Mark Scott Galper
Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97
Mother: Sheri Schrier

Melinda "Peeper" Gardner-Collins
Born: 6/56 Died: 8/07
Mother: Pat Gardner

Justin Brian Gartland
Born: 10/81 Died: 4/05
Parents: Brian & Paulette Gartland

Richard Lamar Gibbs
Born: 3/84 Died: 5/05
Mother: Ann Wasecha

Steven Paul Giuliano
Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95
Mother: Eleanor Giuliano

Jacob Seth Goar
Born: 1/79 Died: 5/01
Parents: Michael & Venus Nunan

Morgan Leann Gomez
Born: 1/08 Died: 1/08
Parents: Amanda & Louie Gomez

Nicholas Gonzalez
Born: 2/63 Died: 10/01
Parents: Nick & Gloria Gonzalez

Evan Leonard Grau
Born: 8/82 Died: 5/04
Parents: Maria & Wayne Grau

Christopher Dudley Gray
Born: 5/83 Died: 2/04
Parents: Dudley & Laurie Gray

Matthew Ryan Gregory
Born: 3/80 Died: 1/11
Parents: Carol & Fred Gregory

Adam Francois Guymon
Born: 4/89 Died: 4/06
Mother: Eileen Guymon

Anthony Joel Guzman
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/08
Mother: Teresa Guzman

Andrew John Gvist
Born: 7/88 Died: 5/05
Father: Mark Gvist

Justin Todd Gwizdala
Born: 10/75 Died: 6/96
Parents: Kathy & Gary Gwizdala

James Burman Hahn
Born: 11/68 Died: 12/05
Mother: Berna Hahn & J. Thomas Hahn

Dakota Max Haight
Born: 9/27 Died: 9/12
Parents: Gail Cochran & Bill Scar

Josephine Olivia Haman
Born: 6/98 Died: 2/10
Aunt: Carolene Ozimok

Grant Henry Hampton
Born: 3/79 Died: 7/05
Parents: Jeri & George Medak

Brandon Allen Hanson
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/10
Mother: Yolanda Alepe

Robert Belmares Harris
Born: 12/66 Died: 12/95
Parents: Bea & Larry Harris

Leslie Geraci Hart
Born: 6/66 Died: 7/11
Father: John Geraci

Rachel Anne Hartman
Born: 2/91 Died: 7/04
Parents: David & Paula Hartman

Caleb Haskell
Born: 6/78 Died: 9/06
Parents: Karen & Kim Haskell

Daniel Hassley
Born: 2/71 Died: 2/90
Parents: Eila & Richard Hassley

Alicia M. Hayes
Born: 1/81 Died: 5/96
Parents: Becky & Dave Jordan

Jason Patrick Healey
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/09
Mother: Sharon Sykes Healey

Emma Joy Heath
Born: 5/98 Died: 6/07
Parents: DJ & Phil Heath

Maddison Grace Herrera
Born: 5/14 Died: 5/14
Parents: Gabriela Partida & Jesse Herrera

Jeffrey Hoffman
Born: 1/86 Died: 8/10
Mother: Gina Hoffman

Hope Ann Honeycutt
Born: 12/62 Died: 6/00
Mother: Donna Honeycutt

Adria Horning
Born: 12/91 Died: 3/07
Parents: Gary Horning & Linda Cipriani

Jeremy Honsinger
Born: 12/70 Died: 10/06
Mother: Sunny Honsinger

Jeremy Michael Howard
Born: 7/83 Died: 6/94
Mother: Donna Howard-Scruggs

Jennifer Nicole Hower
Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04
Brother: Jeff Hower

Miranda Howells
Born: 8/91 Died: 11/09
Father: Walter Howells III

Rachel Suzanne Hoyt
Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95
Sister: Laura Hoyt D’anna

Tara Hudson
Born: 1/86 Died: 1/07
Mother: Mari Hudson

Chad Michael Huisinga
Born: 10/74 Died: 12/95
Parents: Alan & Melinda Huisinga

Hannah Nichea Hupke
Born: 9/87 Died: 6/05
Parents: Bruce & Joni Hupke

Zane Austin Hutchins
Born: 9/03 Died: 2/04
Parents: Mae Rivera & Jon Hutchins
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
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<th>Parents</th>
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<td>Kelli Rigby-Hyde</td>
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<td>John Joseph Iacono</td>
<td>5/02</td>
<td>5/04</td>
<td>Nancy &amp; Anthony Iacono</td>
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<td>1/71</td>
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<td>Francesca Inez &amp; Emmanuel de la Cruz</td>
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<td>John E. James</td>
<td>6/62</td>
<td>9/93</td>
<td>Marilyn &amp; Lupe Arviz</td>
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<td>Kalaea Jennings</td>
<td>4/07</td>
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<td>Nacio &amp; Maria Jennings</td>
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<td>Melissa Gale Jetton</td>
<td>5/58</td>
<td>7/84</td>
<td>James &amp; Cathie Jetton</td>
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<td>William Jimenez</td>
<td>3/94</td>
<td>5/04</td>
<td>Adrianna Jimenez</td>
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<td>Daniel A. Jones V.</td>
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<td>Daniel A. Jones IV.</td>
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<td>Lucille Jones</td>
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<td>Lynda Orr</td>
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<td>Jeff Joyce</td>
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<td>Wadene Duffy</td>
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<td>Lance John Juracka</td>
<td>10/69</td>
<td>4/06</td>
<td>Frank &amp; Nancy Juracka</td>
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<td>Dolores LaRue</td>
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<td>Cherese Mari Laulhere</td>
<td>9/74</td>
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<td>Bernard Lawrence</td>
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<td>Quinn Frances Leslie</td>
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<td>9/93</td>
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<td>Alex J. Mantyla</td>
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<td>Jarro &amp; Bonnie Mantyla</td>
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<td>Kyle Jeffrey Martin</td>
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<td>Audrey Sinclare Marshall</td>
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<td>Daniel George Mateik III</td>
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<td>Daniel McCleran</td>
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<td>Kirk McMulty</td>
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<td>Jeremy Stewart Mead</td>
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<td>Robert Andrew Mead</td>
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<td>Nicole Marie Megaloudis</td>
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<td>Alexis Melgoza</td>
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<td>Shawn Mellen</td>
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<td>Damion Mendoza</td>
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<td>Carlene &amp; Paul Mendoza</td>
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<td>Shannon R. Middleton</td>
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<td>5/06</td>
<td>Candy Middleton</td>
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<td>Steven Douglas Millar</td>
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<td>David &amp; Suzanne Millar</td>
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<td>Patricia Acha Miller</td>
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<td>Christina Acha</td>
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<td>Jamie Susan Mintz</td>
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<td>Angel Flores Misa, Jr</td>
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<td>Roland &amp; Luscia Dilley</td>
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<td>David F. Mobilo</td>
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<td>Danielle Ann Mosher</td>
<td>8/78</td>
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<td>Benjamin A. Moutes</td>
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<td>Kevin &amp; Claudia Moutes</td>
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<td>Peter Anthony Mullro</td>
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<td>Stella Mullro</td>
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<td>Christopher Myers</td>
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<td>Janet &amp; Larry Myers</td>
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<td>Edward W. Myricks II</td>
<td>4/72</td>
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<td>Edward &amp; Sandra Myricks</td>
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<td>Annamay Rebecca Celine Naef</td>
<td>4/95</td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>Heinz &amp; Ursina Naef</td>
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<td>Christian Paul Nagy</td>
<td>5/02</td>
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<td>Paul &amp; Teresa Nagy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Lisa Nakamara | 12/93 | 10/14 | Grace Nakamara | }
Richard Paul Negrete  
Born: 6/43  Died: 2/04  
Mother: Sally Negrete

Joy Ellen Nelson  
Born: 1/97  Died: 1/97  
Parents: Mary Desmond & David Nelson

Eric M. Neuan  
Born: 1/79  Died: 3/09  
Parents: Eric & Lynn Neuman

William Nicasio  
Born: 1/88  Died: 1/14  
Mother: Pearl Nicasio

Danielle Nice  
Born: 7/81  Died: 8/04  
Parents: Daniel & Debbie Nice

Monique Nicholson  
Born: 7/71  Died: 1/08  
Sister: April Nicholson

Denise Northbrook  
Born: 2/67  Died: 8/31  
Parents: Mike & Barbie Schafer

Geoff James Nowak  
Born: 11/97  Died: 2/98  
Parents: Christen Murphey & Geoff Nowak

Logan Kay Nunez  
Born: 1/95  Died: 4/05  
Parents: Mike & Laura Nunez

Michaela Grace Nunez  
Born: 2/05  Died: 7/05  
Parents: Roger & Jennifer Nunez

Sally Anne O’Connor  
Born: 12/62  Died: 2/11  
Mother: Grace “Darline" Dye

Thomas Jinkwang Oh  
Born: 2/72  Died: 6/03  
Sister: Barbara Oh

Tyri Ojose  
Born: 9/10  Died: 7/12  
Mother: Maureen Ojose

Dominique Oliver  
Born: 5/85  Died: 3/02  
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Elliott Shawn Oliver  
Born: 8/75 - 2/13  
Parents: Elliott Joseph Oliver Jr. & Linda Barcela

Henry Ortega  
Born: 5/97  Died: 7/08  
Parents: Henry & Wendy Ortega

Sally O’Toole  
Born: 10/53  Died: 03/85  
Mother: Kay Arndt

Masahiro Ozaki  
Born: 5/78  Died: 8/09  
Sister: Etsuko Moromi
**OUR CHILDREN**

Lexi Noelle Valladares  
Born: 4/04 Died: 7/10  
Parents: Fausto & Erica Valladares

Mark T. Vasquez  
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/11  
Parents: Manuel & Blanca Vasquez

Tommy Villanueva  
Born: 10/68 Died: 5/02  
Parents: Jennie & Edgar Villanueva

Justin Alexander Velasquez  
Born: 7/12 Died 7/12  
Parents: Ricardo & Marcie Velasquez

Eric Douglas Vines  
Born: 7/77 Died: 7/91  
Parents: Doug & Lynn Vines

Mark Daniel Vinson  
Born: 11/78 Died: 7/10  
Mother: Virginia Vinson

Serena Yasmeen C. Viveros  
Born: 11/05 Died: 11/05  
Mother: Brenda Viveros

Chris Henry Vogeler  
Born: 9/66 Died: 12/04  
Parents: Frank & Lois Fisher

Marisa Ann Vuoso  
Born: 7/83 Died: 9/3  
Parents: Debbie & Marco Vuoso

Kristopher Wadman  
Born: 11/82 Died: 10/00  
Parents: Michael & Melodie Wadman

Carl Alan Wagenknecht  
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/04  
Parents: Tom & Janis Wagenknecht

Jeffrey Sinclair Wagstaff  
Parents: Johnny & Barbara Walker

Sister: Sheimekia Wagstaff

Cory Dylan Walker  
Born: 8/76 Died: 3/01  
Parents: Jim and Susan Walker

Eric Webb  
Born: 6/85 Died: 10/07  
Parents: Jim & Vickie Webb

Dennis William Webber  
Born: 5/85 Died: 3/05  
Parent: Blaine & Sin Young Webber

**REMEMBERED**

Sharon Ann Wendt  
Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Carmel Doucet

Brian Scott West  
Born: 8/70 Died: 4/08  
Parents: David & Connie Schlottman

Andreas Wickstrom  
Born: 12/83 Died: 12/01  
Parents: John & Inge Wickstrom

Victoria Winchester  
Born: 2/57 Died: 2/84  
Mother: Erin Adams

Jennifer Winkelspecht  
Born: 7/75 Died: 8/95  
Parents: Brian & Lisa Winkelspecht

Jordan Michael Witte  
Born: 1/87 Died: 11/08  
Parents: Licha & Mike Witte

Bob Woodyard  
Born: 7/55 Died: 10/08  
Bill & Barb Woodyard

Amy Woolington  
Born: 10/85 Died: 1/07  
Parents: Pam Weiss & John Woolington

Christopher Wootton  
Born: 11/86 Died: 5/08  
Father: Jim Wootton

Cristofur Daye Wrotten-Kennedy  
Born: 2/75 Died: 9/01  
Father: Dusty Wrotten  
Mother: Joe Kennedy

Brett Yodice  
Born: 11/89 Died: 5/13  
Parents: Sam & Susan Yodice

Steve R. Young  
Born: 7/57 Died: 2/90  
Mother: Marjorie Young

Whitney Marie Young  
Born: 8/87 Died: 11/06  
Parents: Marlene & Steve Young

Thomas Zachary  
Born: 12/85 Died: 7/11  
Father: Bob McGaha

Kevin Zelik  
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10  
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

**Birthday Tributes...**

In honor of your child’s birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.) * Please remember we are always working a month in advance and need your tributes by the first of the month preceding the actual birthday.

**A Birthday Tribute to:**
Alex Mantyla  
March 1989 - Aug. 2008

Every year at this time, we would reflect on where you would be in life and what you would be doing had you not left this world, when you were only nineteen. The possibilities are endless and of course, we’ll never know. What we do know is that we were incredibly lucky to have shared those nineteen years with you. You changed our lives in more wonderful ways then we can express.

The many birthdays, holidays and travel adventures we spent together are unforgettable, of course. But it is all the memories of our daily adventures and misadventures with you that we miss the most. The simple pleasure of hearing you laugh, of seeing you smile and watching you grow from a blond, curly-haired little angel into the handsome, kind young man you became is one of our greatest treasures. We are so grateful for your beautiful life.

Alex, we feel your presence always. Thank you for watching over us.

Love, Mom and Dad
For Siblings ...

I Miss You

I never put this in writing but I remember the
day of your funeral. I was in my own little world,
I couldn't believe what was happening. For the
funeral home we collected pictures of you and
made a collage of your life, but I wanted to take
more pictures of you later. I didn't want this to
be the end.

We had the funeral and everyone showed
how much they loved you. I hope you heard my
song to you. You were and are the "wind
beneath my wings". When we drove to the
cemetery, I got out and knew we would lay you
next to dad. Nothing seemed real. When I was
sitting there before they were going to bury you, I
didn't hear a word anyone said. I was looking at
the trees blowing in the wind. I actually felt
peace at that moment in time. I felt the wind and
knew you were there. A peace I knew you gave. I
love you. And I knew you were safe. Thanks for
that moment of peace.

--Erica Herbert TCF, Troy, MI

For Grandparents...

Once I saw a grown man cry.
"Now there goes a man with feeling," said I.
He was strong, able, quite well built,
With muscles, gray hair, and charm to the hilt.
I moved toward him slowly and said,
"What's wrong?"
The look he gave me was tear-filled and long.
"I cry for a child.
My grandchild has died."
So I sat beside him and two grown men cried.
--From Bereaved Parents of the USA Fall 1996, author unknown

From Our Members...

And Then There Was Hope

Once, in what is now another life, I thought
support groups were for someone else. I felt that
with research, personal work, discussions with the
elders in my family and wise friends, I would find all
the answers I needed. This worked well until
December of 2002. My son died. The death of my
only child changed everything. My standard
methods of “self help” were not going to get me
through this. I needed more than even Solomon
could give me. And I desperately needed hope.

My first meeting at Compassionate Friends
was in March of 2003. My son had been gone
almost three months; I was traumatized, I could not
speak and I was doubtful that I would ever find
even an obscure hint of peace in my life.

April’s meeting was somewhat better. I spoke
a few words. In May I was rocked by the dual
anticipation of Mother’s Day and my son’s birthday.
In June I participated in the balloon liftoff; I
sprained my ankle as we were walking back from
the park. That night, as I sat at home with ice on
my ankle, I thought about the past five months. I
realized that I was a different person than I had
been earlier in the year. I was no longer the
woman who walked into her first Compassionate
Friends meeting because I was no longer walking
alone. There were others at my side, in front of
me, behind me, encouraging me, offering gentle
suggestions, understanding and listening as I told
my child’s story over and over and over again.

I discovered that those who had walked this
road before me were holding the lanterns of hope
to cast light on my life path. It was these people
and only these people who could reach me, who
could teach me, whose voices could penetrate my
fog, whose hearts could help me to begin the
healing process.

By the time I marked the first anniversary of my
son’s death, I was beginning to discover that I had
been transformed into a different person. Like my
child whose body had died but whose spirit lived on
symbolically in the butterfly, I had become a
different person. I physically felt the pain of other
parents. The first time I offered advice I sat in
wonder at the realization that this very effort
brought a little more light into my soul. Part of my
healing process became the helping process.

Healing is what we seek, but we will never be
“cured”. As parents who have lost our children, we
will never be the same people we were before our
child died. I came to accept this fact. But I also
found that we can live with this wound, which
despite our initial certainty to the contrary, is not
usually fatal. It is forever, it is painful, it is the
worst wound a human can feel, but it is not fatal.

Even when I was wracked with physical pain in
my grief, the light of my Compassionate Friends
gave me a new perspective, one of hope.
Yes, a part of me died with my son, but the part that remains is constantly changing, continually evolving and always reaching for the light of hope. We each choose different ways to reach for hope, to live our lives as well as we possibly can without our precious children. But eventually we all awaken to hope.

My hope did not come as an epiphany out of the blue, but rather, it was more like a false dawn followed by true, muted rays of the morning sun. My hope was a process. I engaged the process by reaching out to others, listening, learning. I learned that the quick answer is rarely the right answer. I learned that silence often says more than words. I made peace with my pain, and I began to reach out to others with words of hope. For words were my gift to those who had given me so much.

At Compassionate Friends we see many new faces each year. Most parents continue their relationship with the group for at least a year, some for even two years. A few stay three years or more. The good news is that those who do not choose to come to meetings have chosen to go forward with their lives in a different way. Going forward with their lives is a very positive step and the goal of each bereaved parent. Not all of us stay; not all of us should stay. But for some of us, the hope continues to rekindle at each meeting.

As we meet the newly bereaved and listen to their story, to their child’s story, to the outpouring of pure agony and heartbreak, we hold the lantern. These parents will not know exactly what it is that we are doing as they are lost in the fog, as we all once were. Yet, we quietly hold the lantern, we keep the chapter moving forward, we meet parents and talk about their children, about our children, about grief, about life, about death, about pain, and about hope. I have chosen to stay and hold the lantern for those who have followed me. For this gives me hope and peace and it keeps my child close to me even in the darkest of nights.

As grief is our companion, time moves forward; the pain becomes less searing, less encompassing. We learn to co-exist with our loss. We treasure our memories, we love our children and our hearts ache with our terrible loss. Yet, we have moved forward on the path. We are holding the lantern for others who find themselves on this path in life. We give this gift of hope with our presence which symbolizes the future of every newly bereaved parent. I remember my child as I walk this road with you.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin, In memory of my son, Todd Mennen

We welcome and encourage you to submit contributions you found meaningful to you in your grief. We prefer your original poems and thoughts, but we can also print other material if proper credit is given to the author. Please take the time to submit a poem or article you found helpful.

News from the National Office... The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that Dallas, Texas, will be the site of the 38th TCF National Conference on July 10-12, 2015. "Hope Shines Bright ... Deep in the Heart" is the theme of this event, which promises to be another great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. For registration or more information visit www.compassionatefriendsl.org.

TCF Is On Facebook .... Please visit and help promote The Compassionate Friends National Organization's Facebook page by becoming a fan. You can get there by clicking on the link from TCF’s national website home page at www.compassionatefriends.org. Or, you can log into Facebook and search for The Compassionate Friends/USA. In addition to the social support aspect, The Compassionate Friends/USA Facebook page will have information about upcoming events.

Our Website... We have created a new website for our chapter. Joe Zelik is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Due to the rising costs of printing and postage, we are asking everyone to get the newsletter online if possible. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. We sent out letters last month asking you to update our files. If you have not responded, please do so. If you have misplaced your letter, please call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 to update by phone. You can also log onto our website at www.tcfsbla.org if you want to do it electronically. If we do not hear from you we will assume you no longer want the newsletter and this will be your last issue.

Thank-you for your understanding and help.

TCF South Bay/LA

The National Office of TCF has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit
http://compassionatefriends.org and follow the directions to register.

Healing the Grieving Heart... Featuring experts who discuss the many aspects of grief, with a main focus on the death of a child and its effects on the family. "Healing the Grieving Heart" can be heard on the Web live at www.health.voiceamerica.com.

Welcome New Members ... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, and the next one might be the one that really helps.

We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.

Thank You ... Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, your donations keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help.

Birthday Tributes... During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: March 1st for April birthdays). Otherwise they will appear if space permits or in the following month's issue.

Phone Friends ... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child with someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.

Cheryl Stephens.............................................(323) 855-2630

Kitty Edler.............................................(310) 541-8221
Karen Merickel......................................(310) 375-2498
Richard Leach (grandchild)......................(310) 833-5213

SIBLING PHONE FRIENDS
Kristy Mueller.........................................(310) 373-9977

REGIONAL COORDINATOR
Olivia Garcia.............................................(818) 212-3506

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book. Each child is given a page in the book. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

Library Information... At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let the librarian know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

Newsletter... For those of you who are receiving the newsletter for the first time, it is because someone has told us that you might find it helpful. We warmly invite you to attend one of our meetings. Please let us know if you know of someone who could benefit from our newsletter which is sent free to bereaved parents. We do ask that professionals, friends, and family members contribute a donation to help offset the costs involved. If any information needs to be changed, or if you would like your child included in the "Our Children Remembered" section, please contact the editor at (310) 530-3214.

Additional Grief Support ....

Bereavement Organizations and Resources:

TCF National Newsletter: For all bereaved parents and siblings. Published quarterly; subscription fee. Contact TCF Inc., P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 (630) 990-0010

FAMILY & FRIENDS OF MURDER VICTIMS: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

ALIVE ALONE: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Alivealone.org

SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Sam & Lois Bloom (310) 377-8857
OUR HOUSE/BEREAVEMENT HOUSE: 1950
Sawtelle Blvd., Suite 255, L.A., CA (310) 475-0299

PATHWAYS HOSPICE: Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031

NEW HOPE GRIEF SUPPORT COMMUNITY: Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Susan K. Beeney, P.O. Box 8057, Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

PROVIDENCE TRINITY CARE HOSPICE AND THE GATHERING PLACE: Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. Call Patty Ellis (310) 546-6407—new number

Torrance Memorial Bereavement Services: (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

THE LAZARUS CIRCLE: Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7;15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

SHARE Pregnancy & Infant Loss: Contact: Megan Heddlesten (800) 821-6819

Walk With Sally: Cancer loss bereavement & art therapy for children- Monica Fyfe (310) 378-5843

Other Grief Support Websites...
agast.org (for grandparents) growww.com
goodgriefresources.com childloss.com
beyondindogp.com griefwatch.dom
angelmoms.com babysteps.com
healingafterloss.org webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com opentohope.com
taps.org (military death) alivealone.org
bereavedparentsusa.org save.org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)

LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS
Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.
San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
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Kristy Mueller
Lori & Dudley Gray
Cheryl & Bill Matasso
Nancy & Elliott Fisher
Kitty Edler
Susan Kass

We would like to thank the following for their updated information and donations to our chapter:

Sonny Honsinger in memory of Jeremy Honsinger & Crystal Pagan
Janet McFarland in memory of Christopher Myers
Georgia Wagnier in memory of Susan Aileen Wagniere
Joseph Sartoris in memory of Jeff Reilly
Cathie Jetton in memory of Melissa Jetton
Frances & Lee Denmon in memory of Lee Denmon
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John Geraci in memory of Leslie Geraci Hart
Janet Ferjo in memory of Daniel Paul Rains
Pauline Cleary Basil in memory of John Francis Cleary
Barbary & Johnny Walker in memory of Jeffery Sinclair Wagstaff
DONATIONS TO THE
SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER
OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

In loving memory of our son, Keith Patrick Riley, 3/69 - 10/99.
Love, Mom & Dad

In loving memory of our beloved son and brother, Kyle Jeffery Martin, 11/80 - 7/04.
Love, Mom & Dad

In loving memory of our son, John Edward James, 06/1962 - 09/1993.
Love, Mom & Dad

In loving memory of Jonathan David Streisand, 1/87 - 8/13. We love you and miss you. You are always in our hearts.
Love, Mom & Dad

In loving memory of Whitney Young, 8/87 - 11/06. We miss you and love you so much!
Love, Mom & Dad

In loving memory of Brandon Armstrong, July 1995 - July 1995 and Dominique Oliver, May 1985 - March 2002. Not a day goes by where I don’t think of you or miss you. You two are the guiding force that makes me want to live, not just exist...
Love, Mom

With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation, we acknowledge the generosity of the previous individuals and companies. Your tax deductible donation, given, in memory of your loved one enables us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and they also help defray newsletter and mailing costs. Please help us reach out to others in this difficult time. Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

When making a donation, please make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chpt.

Mail to: The Compassionate Friends So Bay/ L.A. Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171

In loving memory of________________________________________
Birth date _______________ Death date _______________ Sent From___________________________
Tribute______________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month or it will appear in the following issue.
Butterflies, the symbol of new life and rebirth are fluttering all around me. They circle my head, land on my arms and dance around my feet. I've never seen so many butterflies..... never seen so many kinds. Delicate wings ... colors like sky and grass and the earth. Their flight is a motion of freedom and calmness and is so beautiful to see.

Please let death be a butterfly with our loved ones soaring in an existence that is to wonderful to comprehend. ~author unknown

March 2015

Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly

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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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing or have a new address, please contact us.