



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

DECEMBER 2014 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be Dec. 3rd, first Wednesday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:
The Neighborhood Church
415 Paseo Del Mar
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274
(South of Torrance Beach)

DIRECTIONS: Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--

The Compassionate Friends
Mission Statement...

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Dec. 3rd meeting will start with "Holidays and the Bereaved." If we are not in our regular room, follow the signs to our temporary location.

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Ken at (310) 544-6690. (Friends and family might like one for the upcoming events.)

Mark Your Calendar: Sunday, Dec. 14th will be the World Wide Candle Lighting at Malaga Cove Shopping Plaza.

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

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World Wide Candle Lighting, Sun. Dec. 14th... The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age and any cause.

As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, hundreds of thousands of persons commemorate and honor children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

Believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the Worldwide Candle Lighting, a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died, but will never be forgotten.

Our local chapter will meet at 6:45 at the Malaga Cove Shopping Center on P. V. Drive, at the top of the hill as you would normally come to the meeting. We are honored to have Cassidy Mueller sing and Bob Burt as the key-note speaker. Friends and family are invited to join us. Candles will be provided. Chairs will be set up, but remember to dress warmly. We meet rain or shine.

The regular December 3rd meeting will start with **“Holidays and the Bereaved.”** Although you may be dreading the holidays, TCF has found that it helps to ease into the season with Compassionate Friends who understand the turmoil of emotions you may be having. Their suggestions of how they got through those first holidays can be beneficial in planning for your own. The following articles are designed to help you plan for the upcoming season.

Holiday Season, Grief and Growth

As I think of the approaching holidays, I am confronted with a strange mixture of feelings. I notice excitement that my children will be home, anxiety over the shopping and extra cooking ahead, and an empty kind of sadness that our family has shrunk again this year.

It helps somewhat to realize that others are probably feeling similar complex emotions over what is supposed to be a warm, fun season, but it

does not really minimize my need to make sense of this confusion. When I consider how this holiday season will differ from years past, I feel burdened and lonely, unable to make clear decisions.

When we are grieving, nothing really comes close to making sense to us, yet we are told this confusion and upheaval is normal after a significant loss.

After the death of a loved one, our whole family structure can change. When parents die, we suddenly become the “older generation,” looked to for family wisdom and guidance. Yet, we may not feel any wiser. When a sibling dies, we wonder, “Am I still a sister (brother)?” When a child dies, we may question everything from God to Santa Claus.

How can the holidays be a time of joy and love when we are suffering and missing our loved ones? What can we do to move past the idea of just “making it through” this season? How do we make choices that will be healthy for us?

Answers to these questions come from four ideas many grievers have found to be useful tools.

1. *Acknowledge That This Year Is Different.* The death makes it so, but we can affirm for ourselves and other family members that we will make it through this time. Some changes in life are more stressful than others. We can choose to reduce the powerful fear that seems to accompany change by realizing that every loss also brings a gain.

2. *Plan Ahead.* Selecting beforehand which events of the season we wish to participate in, and letting them be known in the family, can eliminate some of the tension that comes from making last minute decisions. Giving each family member an opportunity to select their own special event can help build quality family time. Deciding which “old family traditions” we really want to keep, and which are no longer appropriate for the individual or the family this year, is helpful. We might select a few new ideas to try this year. If they don’t work out something else can be tried next year.

3. *Give Ourselves Plenty of “TLC”— Time, Love and Care.* As grievers, we need plenty of time to rest and heal. We need time to be quiet and deeply in touch with what has happened in our lives. Taking time to meditate and reflect on our grief is just as appropriate and healthy as taking time to be social and laugh. The forgotten task in grief is loving ourselves in spite of our

frailty, in spite of our mistakes and poor judgements. We are often too quick to turn our errors into full-blown guilt trips. It is necessary to remember that we made decisions based on the knowledge we had at that time. If we had known then what life has taught us since, we might have made a different decision. But, we didn't, and forgiving ourselves for that is a real growth step. Caring for ourselves as well as for others in the family who may also be grieving means eating right, getting some exercise and really experiencing our grief. Acknowledging our feelings means taking time to cry, to be sad and even to honor the feelings of relief and acceptance that we are honestly feeling. In grief there's a place for all feelings.

4. *Check Out Expectations — for Ourselves and Others.* Are our expectations realistic considering the stress and trauma our family has experienced? This is a good time to reduce the holiday cooking by purchasing ready-made items, shop by catalog instead of fighting crowds, and re-think what our budget can handle this year. Grieving is not the time to throw caution to the wind by making quick, unplanned choices that we may regret later. This may be a good time to start drawing names for gifts in the family so everyone's stress is reduced.

When expectations are unrealistic, they are seldom achieved, and that can lead to misunderstanding and disappointments for all. Keeping expectations achievable and clearly communicated helps all family members be winners.

--Pat Andrus Lafayette, Louisiana

Holiday Remembrance

Maybe nothing seems quite right in your house or in your heart this season. Can you ever be happy again? Will the sights and sounds of the holiday season ever touch you again? Will the emptiness always be THIS BIG? No. Nothing stays the same, not even in grief.

Just as soon as you figure out how to get through one day, another day arrives ... with new challenges and obstacles. What helps one day may not even touch the pain the next so be patient with yourself. Know that hardly anyone you see is as happy as you think they are. We all have hurts to hide. Do what you can this season, and let it be enough. But whatever you do, try not to lose the holiday completely.

It may not be the same as it was before, but it is the holiday season, and you are in it. No matter how shattered your life, how fragmented your dreams, there must be light somewhere. There must be hope somewhere.

Our loved ones have died. We did not lose them -- nor did we lose the love we shared. Our loved ones were and still are a part of us. We cannot lose their love.

As long as we know there is joy somewhere, then we know it will come to us again. We just have to hang on tight and believe. Believe in whatever you choose, but at least light a candle this holiday season. And remember the JOY that used to light your heart. Light a candle for HOPE, for remembrance. No matter where you are, or which holiday it is for you, light a candle for LOVE because it is the GREATEST LIGHT OF ALL.

-- Patti Coilligan TCF Pasco County Chapter



Helping Children Grieve at Christmas

Holidays are times of sharing and togetherness. But after a death in the family the Christmas season can be difficult to endure for everyone, including the children. Traditions that bring about memories may bring a flood of emotions for a child. Some families mistakenly try to deny these feelings by avoiding certain holiday customs like putting up a tree or exchanging gifts, according to Alan Wolfelt, author of *Helping Children Cope with Grief*.

"Such avoidance is an impossible task in an environment that constantly reminds us of the holidays," Wolfelt says. "Families might consider withdrawing some from excess holiday activities. Christmastime is very stressful, and the combined emotional weight of grieving may drain children. While there is no easy formula for helping children deal with grief, Wolfelt gives the following suggestions for adults to consider:

*Be aware that your behavior influences a grieving child. The child's ability to cope with the problem depends on the ability of important adults to express their grief and convey to the child that it's okay to express a full range of feeling. Adults must let children know that tears are not a signal of rejection, but sadness. If a parent says, "I feel sad because I miss Grandma," the child will understand that emotions are an acceptable demonstration of grief.

*Don't avoid family tradition during the

holidays. Children find comfort in customs, such as decorating the tree or baking Christmas cookies. Traditions provide a structure for the expressions of the child's thoughts and feelings.

Create a special time during the holidays to talk about the deceased family member. Younger children might find it helpful to look at family photographs when they discuss their memories. While helping children cope with the pain of their grief during the holidays is difficult, slow, and wearing, the process can also be enriching and fulfilling for loving adults.

—excerpts from *Helping Children Cope with Grief*, by Alan Wolfelt

We Can Make It

During the holiday season, both Christians and Jews light candles in celebration of their respective faiths. As they do so, even the darkest rooms become warm and bright from the glow of a candle. Then we can ask ourselves, how powerful or sinister can the darkness be if it can be overcome by the light of one little candle?

There is then a message in this for all of us. When the darkness seems to overwhelm us— and it can be a mental and spiritual darkness as well as the darkness of a winter night— we need to be reminded that it is powerless to withstand the smallest bit of illumination.

So as the world grows colder and darker during these winter months, we as bereaved parents must do what people of many faiths have been taught to do at this season. Light a candle in someone's life to make the darkness and fears flee. A little bit of light is all that most of us need, but oh we need that little bit so badly.

--Bettye & Sam Rosenberg, Louisville, KY



Chanukah, I'm still learning about the traditions. One thing I know is that Chanukah is a family celebration, with an emphasis on children. Yet, there is someone missing from this celebration. Someone to begin teaching the story of the lights. Someone to give chocolate gifts to. (You would be old enough to like candy.) Someone to watch with wonder, the lighting of the candles for each of the eight nights. We miss you. Happy Chanukah, Becky!

Love, Mom and Dad

--Sharon Lowenthal TCF, St. Louis

Low-Fat, Lite Holidays

I'm tired of low fat! I'm tired of fat-free. I'm tired of thinking rice cakes are good; they're not the same as Oreos! I'm tired of trying to be creative in my thinking, my eating, my living, and I'm tired of dreading the holidays. In fact, I'm just plain tired.

Can anyone stop the holidays please? Can anyone find a fat substitute that really tastes like mom's pumpkin pie? Can anyone figure out a cure for the pain of these memories? Probably not. So, as long as we are stuck with the approaching holidays and as long as we remain determined to be healthy and keep up the good low-fat fight, what can we do to turn this season of despair into a season of hope? Where are the beacons of light?

Be patient with yourself. Know that hardly anyone is as happy as you think they might be. We all have our hurts to hide. We are always in a hurry. We want things to be better now. Do what you can this season and let that be enough.

Be realistic. It will hurt, especially if there is an empty chair at the table. Don't try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Lay in a supply of tissues (a roll of toilet paper is more efficient). Anticipation is often far worse than reality. Let those hurting moments come, deal with them and let them go. Leave the word "ought" out of this holiday.

Plan ahead. Grieving people often experience a lack of concentration. Make lists. Prioritize everything. Decide what is really important. (Breathing and potty time rank right up there!) Redefine expectations. Be honest in what you expect to be able to do. We live in a world of ought's and should's and suffer from guilt because we cannot meet our own expectations.

Be kind and gentle to yourself. Figure out what you should do, balance it against what you are capable of doing, and then compromise. Forgive yourself for living when your child died.

Listen to yourself. Find the quiet space within where all answers live. As you become aware of your needs, tell family members and friends. Keep some traditions; choose which ones. Don't toss out everything this year. You can always try changing a routine. Try whatever pops into your head. You can always scrap it if it doesn't work.

Take care of yourself physically. Eat right.

Exercise (or at least watch someone else). Jog your memory!

Hold on to your purse and charge cards. You can't buy away your grief, although you might be tempted to try.

Screen all holiday activities: Will it be the holiday without it? Why do you do this activity? Tradition, habit, obligation? Do you have to do this, or can others do it for you? Do you like doing it? How could this activity be done differently?

Give yourself the gift of emotions. Put the motion back into the emotions. Toss a nerf ball when you're angry, pound a pillow. Go outside and yell while you shovel snow. Find a way to express the intensity of your feelings in a personally non-destructive way.

Buy a gift for your child. Give it away to someone who would otherwise not have a gift. It is the giving, the exchanging of love that we miss. When you share love, it grows.

Hang the stockings, place a wreath on the grave. Do whatever feels right for you and your family.

Share your holidays. Ride the ferry, visit a soup kitchen or nursing home, spend an evening at the bus station. There are lots of lonely people who could use your love and caring.

Work at lifting depression. Take responsibility for yourself. We cannot wait for someone else to wrap up some joy and give it to us. We have to do that for ourselves. Think of things you enjoy and give yourself a treat.

Understand that heartaches will be unpacked. As you sift through the decorations, appreciate the warm, loving memories of each piece. Don't deny yourself the gift of healing tears.

Ask for help. Make a help-on-a-stick sign and stand on the porch, waving it. Someone will notice (but they may not stop). Just because you ask for help doesn't guarantee you'll get some; but if you never ask, no one will ever know how much you might need help or even a hug.

Learn to look for joy in the moment. Learn to celebrate what you do have instead of making mental lists of what you're missing. Change the way you look at things.

Light a special candle. Not in memory of a death, but in celebration of a life and a love shared! Never forget that once someone loved us and we loved back. NO ONE can deny that.

Live through the hurt. Joy can return to warm your heart. I'm not going to let yesterday use up

today. If I have a terrific memory to cherish, I'll enjoy it. I will not allow pain or fear or sadness to ruin the entire season. It may not be the same as before we became bereaved; but whatever it is can be something, and that just may be the beacon of hope in this season of despair.

Grab the fruitcake and the low-fat turkey and get moving to the rhythms of this holiday season—the season where love and memory might lighten the heart and chase the gloom. Skip the fat, shed the tears, light the candle, and find the light. Make this holiday season full of light and love.

-- Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT CT, GMS, bereaved mother

Loneliness and How to Overcome It

Why are there times when a bereaved parent feels lonely, even though surrounded by loving people? Loneliness is the outgrowth of separation from one who has given meaning to life. Yes, other relationships offer meaning, but it is normal for the searing pain from the loss of one's child to supersede the pleasure from other experiences.

Part of yourself has been invested in another person. When that person has died, in a sense, you are lonely for a part of yourself that has been destroyed. At times you look around you and think that no one else is experiencing the pain you are feeling; that no one else's world has been shattered. The self-centeredness is a natural part of the grief process. Do not deny it, but DO NOT HOLD ON TO IT AS A WAY OF LIFE.

Give yourself permission to accept help from others and then reach out and help others. Although your child is not here to give continuity to your life, by having lived and having given purpose to your life, your child can be the bridge of your continuity with life as a thinking, loving, and active person.

--Ruth Eiseman, Louisville, KY TCF



The nicest thing about December is telling our friends we care and remember.

Season's Greetings

--Walnut Creek, CA newsletter

One Word COURAGE

I will not tell you that you are strong. I know you do not feel strong. A single word could bring you to your knees. I will not tell you that I admire you. I know you do not feel admirable. More like confused and hurting; falling down a deep, dark hole. What I will tell you though, is that you have courage. Courage you may not have recognized in yourself. Whenever you open a book on grief, read a magazine article on grief, attend a support group, or talk about your grief, you have courage. Whenever you positively express your suffering, you have courage. When you got out of bed but didn't want to, got dressed, went to work or took care of children and then made it to the end of your day, you found courage. Courage that you never wanted to know you had, but courage that you now have.

Courage is not easy to find, let alone keep. However, it can be found; it can be kept. During those horrible days when you may think you are going to die, keep courage firmly in front of you. When your pain is overwhelming, keep courage firmly in your heart. Courage is where your healing lives.

The opportunities to find courage are many, if we pay attention. When you went to the grocery store, even if you collapsed on the floor at the sight of your child's favorite food, but made it back home, you found courage. When you looked through photo albums of your child and cried and cried, you found courage. When you spoke their name, told their story and allowed yourself to grieve, you found courage.

Courage born can never die. Courage found can never be lost. It can be difficult to wake up every day and find courage. The devastation from our child's death is like nothing we have ever experienced. Words like happy, smiles, laughter, meaning, and joy are concepts in a distant reality we think we will never know again. So when you hear the bereaved parents talk about the return of their smile or how they have found meaning again, let that give rise to your courage. Try to have an attitude that says, "If it can happen for them, maybe, just maybe, it can happen for me." It is true, it can happen for you, it has happened for thousands of parents who did their work and did not let death win.

Bring courage into your life and it will bring along its partners of hope, a positive attitude, and the desire for a better day.

--By Rob Anderson, Sugar Grove, IL



SUICIDE: Changing the Language

Once in a while I write a post regarding the language of suicide. I really hope that people will read it because it is very important for us to spread the word on how we speak of suicide. I've been thinking about it a lot again lately, especially since the two-year anniversary of my stepson's suicide, and wanted to share thoughts in the hope that someone will read it and that that someone will also educate others, when given the chance, to help with the mission to change how we say it:

SUICIDE: It is a death that has so many layers and agendas that it adds another whole level of difficulty to an already terrible loss. Using the word "committed" before suicide is like fingernails down a chalkboard to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide. We are trying to change the language around suicide and no longer say "committed"...and I don't care for "completed" suicide myself (we wouldn't say that someone "completed" cancer or "completed" a car accident).

The reason that "committed" is a difficult term for the survivors left behind after a suicide has occurred is that "committed" generally indicates that what happened was a crime...from back in the Dark Ages when families were even imprisoned when a family member died of suicide (the stigma that still remains following a death by suicide is difficult enough and I pray one day there will be more understanding and education surrounding that as well).

Death by suicide occurs usually by a person who is in so much pain emotionally and sometimes physically that they see that as the only option left to end that unbearable pain. And they truly believe in their heart that they are helping their families by leaving this world...that their loved ones are better off without them. It is not the "coward's way out"...it is a pain that those of us without that level of hopelessness and darkness cannot begin to comprehend. Say, Died "by" suicide. Died "of" suicide. Died "as a result of" suicide. Died "from" suicide. "Lost to" suicide; and even "took their own life" (because that is the reality of what happened)...but, please, never "committed". Help those secondary victims left behind who have suffered this unthinkable loss by changing the way you and others say it.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading this and helping change the language of suicide.

-- Cathy Seehuetter, TCF/St. Paul, MN Chapter

A Loss Before the First Christmas

I think the only thing sadder than looking back at Christmases that were and will never be again is having no Christmases to look back to at all.

There are some people who believe it is easier to lose an infant than an older child, and I am sure that for some parts of grief, they are right, but this is not one of them.

Memories are painful, but they are treasured, wonderful things that can help fill the emptiness. Christmas is one of the big expectations. Matter of fact, it is one of the reasons we have children. So, if our child dies before sharing a Christmas with us, we know we are missing something wonderful, but we don't know exactly what.

We will try as hard as we can, over and over again, to imagine our children on Christmas, but we cannot fabricate a memory. We can not see our child's face light up, or hear their sweet voices, or watch their movements. So the more we try, the more frustrated we become. We hurt horribly, and we are empty, lonely, and devastated. But because we did not have them long enough, most people (even ourselves, sometimes) will feel we have no right to grieve this Christmas.

So I've got to tell you, we have as much right and as many reasons to cry and grieve, as any parent whose child has died.

--Laura Bouse, TCF Hardin County, OH

Newly Bereaved...

Coming Unwrapped

We wrap ourselves for the holidays much like the presents we give. The brightly colored paper hides what's within. When people look at us they only see the outside. We promise ourselves we will not come unwrapped. We'll make it through the family celebrations, the church services, and the big occasion. The paper and the ribbon will remain intact.

But it is the small thing that manages to untie the bow. The little insignificant moment, the Christmas parade, the search for the tree, the discovered ornament, the special carol, the memory, and the paper gets wrenched off. The true Christmas presence shows itself. The inevitable tide of feelings bursts out of the artificially decorated facade. The emotions pour out. The intense anger

wells up. The tears are shed and the holidays come. These are as sure as the tides of the sea and the march of time.

Only a compassionate friend, a bereaved parent, knows of what I speak. Yet the answer isn't in fighting or in denying these feelings. We have paid the price. We have the right to grieve. The resolution of our grief is the grieving.

Our hope for all who read this letter is that you will make it through the holidays. We cannot make the pain go away. But know there are others who suffer with you. We have made it, and together will continue on.

--Hank Hewett TCF, Scranton, PA

For Friends and Family...



If They Only Knew

If only they knew that when I speak of him, I am not being morbid. I am not denying his death. I am proclaiming his life. I am learning to live with his absence. For twenty-six years he was a part of my life, born, nurtured, molded and loved - this cannot be put aside to please those who are uncomfortable with my grief.

If only they knew that when I sit quietly, apparently content with my own company, I am not self indulgently unhappy, dwelling on things which cannot be changed; I am with him. I am seeing his face, hearing his voice, remembering his laughter, recalling his excitement and joy in life. Please allow me this time with him, as I do not begrudge you your time with your children.

If only they knew that when I sometimes weep quietly, I do not cry in self pity for what I have lost. I weep for what he has lost, for the life he loved, for the music which filled his very being, and for all he still longed to hear, for the poetry which moved him to tears, for the beauty about him that daily fed his soul, for the exhilaration and excitement of flying the skies, of searching for his God in the vast space of the universe. For all that he loved and lost, I cry.

If only they knew the feeling of deep grief, the emptiness, the dull pain, the endlessness of death. If only they understood the insanity of the platitudes so freely spoken - that "time heals," that "you'll get over it," that "it was for the best," that "God takes only the best," — and realize that these are more an insult than a comfort, that warm and compassionate touch by another means so much

more.

If only they knew that we will not find true peace and tranquility until we prepared to try to stand in the shoes of others. We will not be understood until we learn to understand compassionately and we will not be heard until we learn to listen with hearts we well as minds.

--Jan McNess, TCF Victoria, Australia

Welcome...



Do Real Men Attend TCF Meetings?

It has often bothered me that more men and persons of cultural minorities don't attend TCF meetings. I know there are societal and cultural restraints which inhibit many bereaved persons from seeking outside help or support. Being both a man and a member of an ethnic group, I know very well the false pride which often restrains us from admitting we are not as self-sufficient as we want others to believe. We are taught (men in particular) at a young age not to reveal when we are hurt. We must be strong and brave and silent. Stoic endurance is really not unique in any culture. The British call it "keeping a stiff upper lip." The Japanese call it gaman. Hispanics pride themselves on their ability to aguantar. In the U.S. it is embodied in the Puritan ethic.

When I began attending TCF meetings regularly, I wondered for a long time whether I was a "real man." Was I less macho than my peers? The answers, I finally decided were yes, no, and maybe. Maybe I could have adjusted to my son's death all by myself. Maybe I could have shunned the possibilities of self-destructive behavior, drunkenness, drug abuse, wild living, or the unraveling of my family life without TCF. Maybe I could have dealt alone with all the anger, despair, and depression. Fortunately I didn't have to.

I readily admit I wasn't very enthusiastic about going to my first TCF meeting. I imagined a group of people sitting around crying on each other's shoulders, bemoaning their cruel fate. Instead, I found people who were hurting as much as I; who, like me, were angry, who also often felt depressed – but who were working very hard to mend the tattered fabric of their lives! I soon discovered that this was a place where I could talk about my grief and still feel safe about it. Nobody was going to think me less of a man for not getting over my son's death in a few months.

TCF doesn't promise or offer any quick fixes. There are no magic words or formulas to take away your grief. Whatever "magic" takes place, I know now, happens slowly. I don't believe it is possible for a bereaved parent to "forget," but I think TCF's support and understanding help make it easier for us to go on with our lives. We need not become lifelong emotional cripples.

To all of you hurting people who have never attended a TCF meeting, I urge you to give it a try. Attend two or three meetings and see if some of the "magic" doesn't rub off on you. What have you got to lose? You can't hurt any worse than you already have. TCF is for any and all bereaved parents – men and women, minorities and gringos, people of any or no religious faith. The one thing everyone at TCF has in common is the death of a child – and how it feels.

--Steve Perez TCF, Denver, CO.

Helpful Hint..



Gifts of Love

Be prepared to find "gifts" from your children when you unpack your Christmas decorations for the first time. It seemed as if each box I opened there was something left there from her something that I had long forgotten about: one box contained a picture of her in a Santa hat smiling that brilliant braces-laden grin, another her carefully crafted handmade ornaments, another one a hand-written card in her just learning-to-print handwriting, and on and on... so many memories. I realized that in a sense, these were Nina's gifts to me now that she wasn't physically here. She was giving me the gifts of memories ... beautiful memories that were given in love. Those memories will only increase in value as the years go on. They are invaluable because they are yours and yours alone ... no one can ever take those priceless memories away. Though they may hurt now and probably always will but not as intensely, give yourself a gift ... the gift of emotion and allow those healing tears to fall. Give yourself time to grieve.

--Excerpt of Cathy Seehuetter, St. Paul, MI

Draw strength from the holiday traditions of your past; hope from the changes you make for the present; and from them both, faith in your ability to handle the future.

--Shirley Melin, TCF, Aurora, IL

Book In Review...



You Are the Mother of All Mothers: A Message of Hope for the Grieving Heart by Angela Miller.

“There are few books that address the weight of guilt and shame that a

grieving mother carries with her after the loss of her child. The deep feeling of failure that accompanies child loss can be heart, mind and soul crippling. Re-engaging in life after loss and attempting to find a sliver of hope again is an on-going battle— one no bereaved mother should fight alone. No matter the age or cause of death, no matter the story, this book is for you.”

Christmas Time

Christmas time will soon be here,
 With Santa on his way.
 The joy, the fun, has faded, son
 Since you went away.
 The kids will all be here again,
 Around the fire we'll sit.
 Talking of what used to be,
 As we reminisce a bit.
 The memories of seasons past,
 Haunt me this time of year.
 I can still see you on Santa's knee,
 Whispering in his ear.
 It isn't like it used to be,
 When you were here to share.
 A sadness comes, a tear is shed,
 When we see your empty chair.
 And so our Christmas Angel,
 A candle we will light
 And pray wherever you may be,
 You'll think of us tonight.
 –Gail Macdiarmid



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 Bourdequ Gentry From Stars in the Deepest Night - After the Death of a Child

The Night Before Xmas for Bereaved Parents

‘Twas the month before Christmas and I dreaded the days,

That I knew I was facing – the holiday craze.

The stores were all filled with holiday lights,
 In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making their holiday plans,
 My heart was breaking – I couldn't understand.

I had lost my dear child a few years before,
 And I knew what my holidays had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,
 I sprang to my feet and was looking around.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The sight that I saw took my breath away.
 And my tears turned to smiles in the light of the day.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
 But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.

With beauty and grace they performed a dance,
 I knew in a moment, this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from above,

That my child was still near me and that I was loved.

The message they brought was my holiday gift.
 And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view.

One allowed me to pet it - as if it knew -
 that I needed the touch of its fragile wing,
 To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed, I carried the thought,
 Of the message the butterflies left in my heart –

That no matter what happens or what days lie ahead,

Our children are with us – they're not really dead.
 Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my ears.

A message of hope – a message so dear.
 And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight.

To all bereaved parents – We love you tonight.

--Faye McCord, TCF Jackson, MS



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: 7/005
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 Barcnas
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
Born: 7/61 Died: 4/99
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

Frank Becker
Born: 11/61 Died: 8/07
Parents: Al & Louise Becker

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

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: Fredia McGrew

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

Michael Bowen
Born: 5/95 Died: 8/14
Mother: Tomasa Richmond

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 Hockenberry

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 Siau & Wibawa Chou

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

Ophelra 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

Tiffany Corkins
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/05
Mother: Nancy Lamb

Hugo Ignacio Corbalan
Born: 4/84 Died: 5/08
Mother: Isabel Acosta

Marika Critelli
Born: 3/78 Died: 11/09
Father: Michael Critelli

Joseph Francesco Michael Curreri
Born: 9/80 Died: 10/07
Mother: Karen Curreri

Scott Curry
Born: 8/59 Died: 7/08
Mother: Marilyn Nemeth

Justin Dalton
Born: 9/74 Died: 8/09
Mother: Janis Farran

Rodney D. Day, Jr.
Born: 4/96 Died: 6/01
Parents: Jersuha Day

Danielle Ann Davis
Born: 10/78 Died: 3/10
Mother: Jackie Davis

Michael David Deboe
Born: 12/75 Died: 5/09
Parents: Dave & Judy Deboe

Phillip Dennis Delurgio
Born: 11/64 Died: 7/10
Mother: Denise Nolan Delurgio

Anthony Joseph Demasio
Born: 6/52 Died: 7/00
Vivian Demasio

Lee Denmon, III
Born: 7/79 Died: 3/03
Parents: Frances & Lee Denmon, Jr.

Douglas Thorn Dethlefsen
Born: 11/64 Died: 11/09
Father: Douglas G. Dethlefsen

Cori Daye Desmond
Born: 3/80 Died: 12/09
Parents: Mark & Monica Desmond

Luke Edward Devlin
Born: 12/07 Died: 12/07
Parents: Jacqueline & Tom Devlin

Allison Jeanine Kirkbride Dewart
Born: 10/87 Died: 1/06
Parents: Z & Michael Dewart

Gary A. Dicey, II
Born: 4/82 Died: 6/98
Father: Gary A. Dicey, Sr.

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

Heidi Dominguez
Born: 8/68 Died: 06/13
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 & Ampy 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 Egnatoff
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 Engelman

Richard Paul Engelman
Born: 02/66 Died: 03/95
Parents: Janette & Laszlo Engelman

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 Ferralez
Born: 2/74 Died: 12/02
Parents: John & Rebecca Ferralez

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 Flynn
Born: 4/61 Died: 1/05
Mother: Peggy Flynn

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

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

Peter J. Fuentes
Born: 2/68 Died: 3/98
Mother: Pat Fuentes

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 Leeann 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: Caroline 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 & Jesse Herrera

Kent Hisamune
Born: 6/00 Died: 6/00
Parents: Toshi & Hideko Hisamune

Jesse 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
Grandmother: Charlotte Crager

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



Casie Leean Hyde
Born: 3/89 Died: 12/05
Mother: Kelli Rigby-Hyde

John Joseph Iacono
Born: 5/02 Died: 5/04
Parents: Nancy & Anthony Iacono

Ben Francisco Inez de la Cruz
Born: 1/71 Died: 11/91
Parents: Francesca Inez & Emmanuel de la Cruz

John E. James
Born: 6/62 Died: 9/93
Parents: Marilyn & Lupe Arvizo

Kalaea Jennings
Born: 4/07 Died: 9/07
Parents: Nacio & Maria Jennings

Melissa Gale Jetton
Born: 5/58 Died: 7/84
Parents: James & Cathie Jetton

William Jimenez
Born: 3/94 Died: 5/04
Sister: Adrianna Jimenz

Daniel A. Jones V.
Born: 5/92 Died: 10/09
Father: Daniel A. Jones IV.

David B. Jones
Born: 3/50 Died: 3/01
Mother: Lucille Jones

Thomas Sean Jordahl
Born: 7/67 Died: 4/03
Mother: Lynda Orr

Jeff Joyce
Born: 2/68 Died: 4/01
Mother: Wadene Duffy

Lance John Juracka
Born: 10/69 Died: 4/06
Parents: Frank & Nancy Juracka

Heather Mary Kain
Born: 6/83 Died: 2/10
Mother: Maura Kain

Edwin J. Kaslowski
Born: 11/67 Died: 7/96
Mother: Carolyn Kaslowski

Emily Matilda Kass
Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06
Mother: Susan Kass

Scott Ira Kaufman
Born: 4/68 Died: 7/95
Mother: Renee Kaufman

Douglas Drennen Kay
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06
Parents: Steve & Diane Kay

Kalin Marie Keech
Born: 10/90 Died: 6/09
Richard & Kris Keech

Kathryn Anne Kelly
Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91
Parents: Dick & Timmy Kelly

Timothy Michael Kerrigan
Born: 4/68 Died: 8/02
Mother: JoAnna Kerrigan

Sean A. King
Born: 7/63 Died: 12/07
Parents: Catherine & Michael King

Kay Dee Kinney-Palser
Born: 6/87 Died: 6/99
Grandmothers: Diana Palser & Kay Kinney

Colby Joshua Koenig
Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10
Parents: Cindy Tobis & John Koenig

Keith Konopasek
Born: 1/63 Died: 7/95
Parents: Ken & Mary Konopasek

Michael Kroppman
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12
Parents: Brenda & Greg Kroppmann

Susan Ann Kruger
Born: 9/64 Died: 6/08
Mother: Gloria Swensson

Kyle Kubachka
Born: 1/89 Died: 11/08
Parents: Keith & April Kubachka

Natalie Samantha Large
Born: 6/05 Died: 6/05
Parents: Burke & Maya Large

Dolores LaRue
Born: 8/57 Died: 11/08
Mother: Maggie Ramirez

Cherese Mari Laulhere
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96
Parents: Larry & Chris Laulhere

Bernard Lawrence
Born: 2/63 Died: 12/06
Mother: Jackie Bowens

Bryan Yutaka Lee
Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07
Mother: Kathee Lee

Steven J. Lee
Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06
Mother: Donna Lee

Jessica Leffew
Born: 9/96 Died: 4/14
Parents: Jarrad & Omica Jelsma

Avery James Lent
Born: 12/03 Died: 7/06
Parents: Crystal Henning & Dan Holly

Brian Lopez
Born: 9/93 Died: 4/14
Parents: Jarrad & Omica Jelsma

Kevin Le Nguyen
Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14
Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen

Wendy Levine
Born: 10/65 Died: 11/95
Parents: Paul & Sharon Levine

Michael Lococo
Born: 2/55 Died: 1/10
Mother: Patrina Lococo

Richard Lee Luthe
Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98
Parents: Jeff & Lorraine Luthe

Shauna Jean Malone
Born: 8/70 Died: 1/13
Parents: Tom & Mary Malone

Michelle Marie Mandich
Born: 5/89 Died: 2/05
Parents: Michael & Lori Mandich

Daniel Edward Manella
Born: 9/67 Died: 10/98
Sister: Kathleen Manella

Elizabeth Mann
Born: 7/60 Died: 5/05
Parents: David & Olivia Mann

Janet Sue Mann
Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10
Mother: Nancy Mann

Gabriella Mantini
Born: 5/85 Died: 8/06
Mother: Martha Mantini

Alex J. Mantyla
Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08
Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Kyle Jeffrey Martin
Born: 11/80 Died: 7/04
Parents: David & Joanne Martin

Jason Lee Martineau
Born: 9/79 Died: 12/07
Father: James Bakos

Audrey Sinclair Marshall
Born: 2/00 Died: 3/00
Parents: Don & Kimberly Marshall

Paul Martinez
Born: 1/86 Died: 3/08
Mother: Lorraine Martinez

Daniel George Mateik III
Born: 12/84 Died: 6/09
Mother: Stefanie Hudak

Daniel McClernan
Born: 7/53 Died: 2/07
Mother: Lee McClernan

Kirk McMulty
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14
Mother: Elaine Mc Multy
Sister: Reme Mc Multy

Robert Andrew Mead
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11
Mother: Carol Mead

Nicole Marie Megaloudis
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-Rongen

Alexis Melgoza
Born: 3/90 Died: 6/11
Mother: Gina Melgoza

Shawn Mellen
Born: 05/81 Died: 8/99
Godmother: Rose Sarukian

Damion Mendoza
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92
Parents: Carlene & Paul Mendoza

Shannon R. Middleton
Born: 2/77 Died: 5/94
Mother: Candy Middleton

Steven Douglas Millar
Born: 2/70 Died: 10/00
Parents: David & Suzanne Millar

Patricia Acha Miller
Born: 1/62 Died: 11/10
Mother: Christina Acha

Jamie Susan Mintz
Born: 11/52 Died: 12/04
Sister: Jessica Mintz

Angel Flores Misa, Jr
Born: 10/69 Died: 7/06
Parents: Roland & Luscita Dilley

David F. Mobilio
Born: 7/71 Died: 11/02
Parents: Richard & Laurie Mobilio

Danielle Ann Mosher
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97
Parents: Paul & Rose Mary Mosher

Benjamin A. Moutes
Born: 3/07 Died: 5/10
Parents: Kevin & Claudia Moutes

Peter Anthony Murillo
Born: 11/72 Died: 10/04
Mother: Stella Murillo

Christopher Myers
Born: 10/86 Died: 5/06
Parents: Janet & Larry Myers

Edward W. Myricks II
Born: 4/72 Died: 10/11
Parents: Edward & Sandra Myricks

Annamay Rebecca Celine Naef
Born: 4/95 Died: 10/11
Parents: Heinz & Ursina Naef

Christian Paul Nagy
Born: 5/02 Died: 5/02
Parents: Paul & Teresa Nagy

Richard Paul Negrete
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04
Mother: Sally Negrete



Our Children Remembered



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 Nicassio
Born: 1/88 Died: 1/14
Mother: Pearl Nicassio

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

Tyiri 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

Caitlin Nalani Oto
Born: 10/88 Died: 2/05
Father: Carl Oto

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

Masahi Ozaki
Born: 5/78 Died: 8/09
Sister: Etsuko Moromi

Crystal Pagan
Born: 6/74 Died: 3/14
Mother: Sunny Honsinger

Lucas Hunter Palar
Born: 11/89 Died: 5/06
Parents: Hugh Palar & DeAnna Williams

Armon Parker
Born: 4/72 Died: 3/04
Mother: Sabrina Parker

Maddison Grace Partida
Born: Died:
Mother: Gabriela Partida

Annemarie Pellerito
Born: 9/73 Died: 8/03
Parents: Vicki & Pete Pellerito

Joseph Ryan Persh
Born: 1/03 Died: 2/03
Parents: Gary & Jane Persh

Daniel Andrew Peterson
Born: 1/78 Died: 5/85
Mother: Gay Kennedy

Richard Phillips
Born: 9/81 Died: 3/11
Mother: Lisa Grant

Jennifer Pizer
Born: 10/69 Died: 4/91
Parents: Janis & Bud Pizer

Chris Pierce
Born: 11/77 Died: 4/07
Sister: Stacy Pierce

Steven Randall Prather
Born: 9/62 Died: 8/10
Parents: Stu & Evalyn Prather

D'Juan Marcel Pratt
Born: 12/79 Died: 11/06
Mother: Gwendolyn Elaine Maiden

Steven Quesada
Born: 8/77 Died: 7/14
Parents: Eleanor & Esther Quesada

Shannon Quigly
Born: 11/26/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen Shortridge

Daniel Paul Rains
Born: 4/72 Died: 3/91
Mother: Janet Ferjo

Jeffrey Alan Rakus
Born: 10/86 Died: 7/06
Parents: Tony & Donna Rakus

Julius Ramirez JR.
Born: 8/10 Died: 8/10
Parents: Bridle & Jules Ramirez

Leo Joshua Rank II
Born: 3/11 Died: 4/12
Parents: Roberta Redner & Leo Rank

Cindy Ranftl
Born: 8/68 Died: 7/97
Parents: Pat & Bob Ranftl

Tejal Pati Reddy
Born: 6/86 Died: 12/08
Parents: Pranitha & Krupa Reddy

Richard R. Reyes
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/08
Mother: Terry Reyes

Aaron Rico
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10
Parents: Cameron & Annette Rico

Keith Patrick Riley
Born: 3/69 Died: 10/99
Parents: Kevin & Debby Riley

Christopher Rivera
Born: 10/67 Died: 1/06
Mother: Katherine Wagner

Ryanne Robles
Born: 10/12 Died: 10/12
Mother: Glenda Osborne

Ruth "Vanny" Rodriguez
Born: 10/73 Died: 5/01
Parents: George & Ruby Rodriguez

Christine E. Rojas
Born: 6/64 Died: 12/94
Parents: Ray & Esther Rojas

Jamie (James) Lloyd Roman
Born: 4/78 Died: 2/97
Mother: Carolyn Roman

Frankie Romero
Born: 10/81 Died: 9/93
Mother: Magdalena Hilda Salas & Francisco L. Romero

Dominic Niall Pennington Roque
Born: 8/02 Died: 9/09
Parents: Kerrie & Ren Roque

James Garrett Ross
Born: 12/74 Died: 10/05
Parents: Jim & Sharon Ross

Michael William Roth
Born: 6/71 Died: 12/08
Parents: Karen & William Roth

John Patrick Rouse
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02
Mother: Sharon Rouse

Giovani Rubalcava
Born: 4/95 Died: 8/14
Parents: Gina & Dennis Diviak

Michael B. Ruggera, Jr.
Born: 4/51 Died: 4/96
Parents: Michael & Frances Ruggera

Shannon Quigley Runningbear
Born: 12/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen Crowley Shortridge

Joseph Sahu
Born: 6/89 Died: 4/12
Parents: Ron & Cathy

Armando Sainz
Born: 6/76 Died: 2/02
Mother: Jennie Hernandez

Andrew Patrick Sakura
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08
Parents: Bruce & Karen Sakura

Jeffrey Alan Sampson
Born: 3/86 Died: 5/05
Parents: Claude & Paula Sampson

Lisa Sandoval
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92
Parents: Susan & Ruben Sandoval

F. Marlow Santos
Born: 10/84 Died: 7/93
Parents: Fred & Julie Gillette

Michael William Schlarb
Born: 4/61 Died: 7/14
Parents: Bill & Sharon Schlarb

Karen Ailegra Scholl
Born: 8/64 Died: 4/99
Mother: Kay Scholl

Matt Scholl
Born: 2/73 Died: 4/08
Parents: Bill & Kay Scholl

Candace Arond Schonberg
Born: 3/98 Died: 11/00
Parents: Andrene & Arond Schonberg

Jonathan "Jamie" Schubert
Born: 7/65 Died: 12/06
Parents: Lynn & Roy Schubert

Melissa Lauren Schweisberger
Born: 10/84 Died: 11/99
Parents: John & Margarita Schweisberger

Patrick C. Shillings Jr
Born: 1/88 - Died: 10/09
Mother: Rena Shillings

Dylan Elwood Sievers
Born: 8/08 Died: 8/08
Parents Daren & Marne Sievers

Tyson Donald Sievers
Born: 8/08 Died: 9/08
Parents: Darren & Marne Sievers

Spencer Simpson
Born: 1/80 Died: 6/13
Parents: Rich & Shelly Simpson

Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

Larry A. Stauffer
Born: 1/67 Died: 5/08
Mother: Shirley Finnin

Miaamor Jennine Steen
Born: 7/05 Died: 9/10
Father: Donya Steen



OUR CHILDREN

Nancy Sterger
Born: 8/57 Died: 6/12
Mother: Ann Leer

Daniel John Swiggum
Born: 6/88 Died: 7/08
Parents: Stewart & Marian Swiggum

Elizabeth D. Szucs
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11
Parents: Dolores & Frank Szucs

Anthony Tanori
Born: 8/82 Died: 8/12
Parents: Chuck & Sylvia Tanori

Joseph Tauaefa
Born: 2/85 Died: 7/10
Parents: Loi & Sioka Tauaefa

Kristi Nicole Taylor
Born: 5/80 Died: 9/94
Parents: Kathy & Cory Taylor

John Teresinski
Born: 12/67 Died: 1/00
Parents: Beverly & Victor Teresinski

Ryan William Thomas
Born: 2/82 Died: 4/04
Mother: Linda Thomas

Laura C. Toomey
Born: 1/69 Died: 12/78
Mother: Michael & Elizabeth Toomey

Michael D. Toomey
Born: 4/62 Died: 2/05
Mother: Michael & Elizabeth Toomey

Nathan Torbert
Born: 1/78 Died: 12/05
Mother: Rebecca Williams

David Torres
Born: 6/66 Died: 3/06
Mother: Joyce Whirry

Marcelo Torres
Born: 8/81 Died: 9/03
Parents: Jaime & Carmen Torres

Brian Gregory Trotter
Born: 10/78 Died: 8/94
Mother: Abby Trotter-Herft

Ubong Jabari Uko
Born: 2/81 Died: 5/09
Mother: Denise Dues

Vance C. Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 3/12
Mother: Maria R. Valdez

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

Gregory Earl Veal
Born: 2/90 Died: 7/00
Mother: Virginia Veal

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 Yasmeeen 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: 3/93
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

Susan Wagniere
Born: 7/75 Died: 7/13
Mother: Georgia Wagniere

Jeffrey Sinclair Wagstaff
Born: 9/80 Died: 4/99
Parents: Johnny & Barbara Walker
Sister: Sheimekia Wagstaff

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

REMEMBERED

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

Sharon Ann Wendt
Born: 6/54 Died: 4/99
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 Wroten-Kennedy
Born: 2/75 Died: 9/01
Mother: Dusty Wroten
Father: 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:
Tamara Lynette Boyd
12/1965 - 12/2000**



A tribute to Tamara,
My beloved Tamara passed away 14 years ago on December 14, 2000. Oh it has been a lonely road but each year I think I have made another year.

Reading the newsletter from The Compassionate Friends has truly been a blessing. It is not that I want to know other people are suffering and grieving, but it is a relief to know that you are not alone. To read and hear from others that have experienced thoughts of anger and despair and then joy and happiness on different occasions just as I have.

To those that have recently lost loved ones, you will get through it. If you are a believer, God will walk with you and give you strength and courage to feel blessed that you were able to spend the time that you had with that loved one.

So I use this newsletter to help others that I believe it will be an inspiration to them as it has to me. I am truly grateful to everyone that contributes to this publication.

Gloria Jones



For Siblings...

*In your gathering of memories
invite your courage to remember
everything.*

Enjoying the Holidays in a Different Way ... Without My Brother



I was shocked and stunned when I received the news that my brother Scott had died in a car accident. I thought my brother was going to be in my life forever. We grew up together, experienced a shared history, and knew things about each other that no one else will ever know. I always assumed we'd raise kids together, grow old together, and share many more holidays together.

So how did I not only survive the holidays, but eventually learn how to enjoy them again without my brother?? It was a rocky, painful journey, with pain that hit like waves, sometimes when I least expected it. The holidays brought back so many memories; every song, smell, and tradition was bittersweet.

Initially, joy made me feel guilty. I worried that if I let go of the pain, I would be letting go of my brother's memory. It felt disloyal to experience positive feelings when I missed my brother so much. Well-meaning friends told me that my brother would want me to have a happy holiday, and while I knew this on an intellectual level, my heart wasn't ready to accept it yet.

There were some relatives who tried to recreate a typical Christmas, with family traditions, as if my brother had never died. Not acknowledging my brother was the worst thing anyone could do. The pretense was that everything needed to return back to normal. However, things in my life were forever changed and I needed to figure out how to create a new holiday normal. For me, this meant finding a way to honor the memory of my brother while at the same time reinvesting in my new life.

Here are some of the things that have helped me during the holidays. I hope they will help you as well. However, everybody who is grieving must decide what works best for them:

Holiday Survival Tips:

- Plan in advance how you are going to spend the holidays, and be able to say no if you need to.
- Take a break from holiday traditions that are too painful - create new traditions.
- Connect with others. Share stories of past holidays and spend time reflecting back. Keep your loved one's memory alive for those who were too young to remember the person.
- Include memories of your loved one in your celebration (e.g., light a candle, display pictures, make a toast in honor of the person).

My brother played many roles during the holidays. I can fill some of these roles but there are many more that will never be filled, and I fill those with all the memories that he left behind. Although we are poorer for having lost our loved ones, we are richer for having known them. I hope you will be able to celebrate the happiness, laughter, and memories that your brother brought into your life by enjoying this holiday in a new and different way!

-- Dr. Heidi Horsley, executive director and cofounder of the Open to Hope Foundation.

To All Siblings this Holiday Season...

Be guided by the reality that there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays after your sibling has died.

Do what you need to do to get yourself through the holidays. We grieve differently than our parents do. Yes, we need to respect their grief, but we need to remember ours. Our siblings would want us to laugh and sing the Christmas carols, but we just may not be ready yet.

Guilt? Oh, yes, we will feel that this holiday season. But we may also celebrate their lives in our own special way. Whatever you choose to do, do what's good for you. Everyone is at a different stage in their grief. The holidays make the reality of loss even harder. I hope this holiday season you can find peace and love in memories. Please know you are not alone.

-- Vera, Sara's sister St. Paul MN TCF newsletter

For Grandparents...



Dear Santa,

You may not remember me, but I was the one in the mall last week with the red coat on. I asked you to bring me a Barbie car and plane for Christmas.

Well, I am not writing for me, but for my Mom-Mom. Mommy always tells me that when you cry a lot, Santa won't come visit. But I wanted to ask you to make an exception to your rules for my Mom-Mom this year. You see, she lost her youngest son in the summer time and I can tell she cries when we are not with her. She misses my Uncle Marshal very very much.

When people ask her what she wants for Christmas, all she says is she wants Marshal back. Santa, I'm not sure if heaven is on your way

to my house, but if it is, can you stop and pick him up? I know this is late, but I didn't think you would mind. You can leave him at my house and we will take him to Mom-Mom's since she doesn't have a chimney. You might need to drop off some of the other gifts first because Marshal is real tall. If you want to, you can leave my presents at the North Pole, I will be happy just to see my Mom-Mom's face when she sees Marshal.

Santa, we eat dinner at 3 o'clock, so if you have time you can eat with us.

Love, Briana, Marshal's niece

Reprinted from the Atlanta Area TCF newsletter

From Our Members...



"Love is missing someone whenever you're apart, But somehow feeling warm inside because you're close in heart."

-- Kay Knudsen

A Mother's Shoes

I am wearing a pair of shoes
They are ugly and uncomfortable shoes

I hate my shoes
Each day I wear them and each day I wish I had another pair

Some days my shoes hurt so bad that I do not think I can take another step
Yet I continue to wear them

I get funny looks wearing these shoes
They are looks of sympathy

I can tell in others eyes that they are glad they are my shoes and not theirs

They never talk about my shoes
To learn how awful my shoes are might make them uncomfortable

To truly understand those shoes you must walk in them
But once you put them on you can never take them off

I now realize that I am not the only one who wears these shoes
There are many pairs in this world

Some women are like me and ache daily as they try to walk in them

Some have learned how to walk in them so they don't hurt quite as much

Some have worn the shoes so long that days go by before think about how much they hurt

No woman deserves these shoes

I will forever walk in the shoes of a Mother who has lost a child.

--Author unknown. Shared by Sue Schrock. Sue found this on a Facebook TCF Loss to Substance Abuse page, a closed group. Her son died of a drug overdose.

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 next year's event, which promises more of this year's great national Conference experience. The 2015 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Dallas. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience!

TCF Is On Facebook Please visit and help promote The Compassionate Friends National Organization's new 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 are now posting a tribute page for each of our children. Please visit the site and add your child's information. You can also download the monthly newsletter which will help defray chapter expenses of the printing and mailing of your newsletter. (Please let us know if you can be removed from the regular mailing list.) Contact Crystal at: crystal@tcfsbla.org and she will help you with the steps to create your own tribute.

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: Dec. 1 for Jan. 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
- Joey Vines.....(310) 658-4339

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

goodgriefresources.com
beyondindogp.com
angelmoms.com
healingafterloss.org
survivorsofsuicide.com
taps.org (military death)
bereavedparentsusa.org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)

childloss.com
griefwatch.dom
babysteps.com
webhealing.com
opentohope.com
alivealone.org
save.org

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:

Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month
and to

The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER LEADERS: Linda Zelik
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
TREASURER: Ken Konopasek
CARDS: Crystal Henning
WEBSITE: Joe Zelik

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Lori & Dudley Gray	Cheryl Stephens
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy & Elliott Fisher	Ken Konopasek
Kitty Edler	Crystal Henning
Susan Kass	



Other Grief Support Websites...

agast.org (for grandparents) groww.com

DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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

In loving memory of Michael William Schlarb, April 1961 - July 2014. Sent with love and prayers to the Schlarb Family as they mourn and grieve for their beloved son, Michael, who died so suddenly and tragically.

Stella Balesh

In loving memory of John Edward James, June 1962 - Sept. 1993. Thanksgiving is almost here. I am so happy for the 31 years you were with us and all the love we shared.

I love you as always, my son. Mom

Our year end donation is made in loving memory of our son, Andrew Patrick Sakura, March 1990 - March, 2008.

Bruce & Karen Sakura

Our year end donation is made in loving memory of our son, Scott M. Dykstra, July 1972 - Oct. 2001.

Mike & Rita Dykstra

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 _____

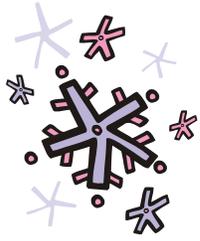
Birth date _____ Death date _____ Sent From _____

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.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171

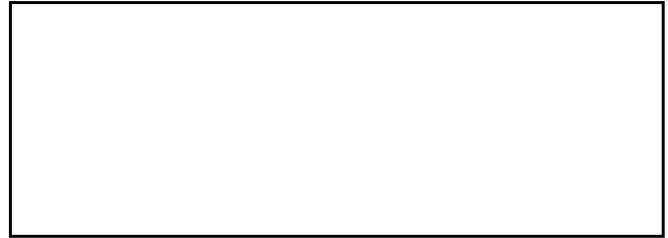
NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 3223
TORRANCE CA 90503



Like the snowflakes that herald
the season, each child is unique.
If their time with us is brief,
the memory of their beauty
lasts forever...
~ Author Unknown

December 2014

– Change of Service Requested –



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.

