



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Families After a Child Dies



## South Bay/L.A. Chapter



A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND FAMILIES

FEB. 2012 ISSUE

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### OUR NEXT MEETING

will be February 1st, the 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)

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

**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.--**

#### WHO ARE WE...

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen, to share, and to support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

#### FEBRUARY...

This month's topic will start with "Healing From Your Broken Heart".

Upcoming Events: July 20-22: TCF 35<sup>th</sup> National Conference  
Hotel reservations are filling up fast. Get yours in. See pg. 16 for more information.

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

Picture Buttons of your child are available. Call Ken at (310) 544-6690.

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## February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting..... "Healing from Your Broken Heart"

What is the condition of your heart?"

When you are newly bereaved, you often feel like you have a broken heart that will never heal. With time and grief work, you will learn how to replace that pain and suffering with hope and a sense of peace that you can probably not fathom at this point in your grief.

This meeting, we have invited several "veteran" bereaved parents to share how they overcame their pain and started to look forward to a new life that did not revolve around their grief. This is a meeting you don't want to miss. We will discuss the different ways we start the healing process and proceed with the many conflicting feelings of grief. We invite you to join us as we discuss the paths we took to go from a broken heart, overwhelmed with grief, to a life that can again hold hope for the future.

### Healing – The Best Memorial

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt, and despair, all of which now control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand".

This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face. However, fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way and who have learned, out of the morass of loneliness, anger, guilt, and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope which, though small and fleeting at first, becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. This will occur even though there is still no understanding of "why".

By working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger (including anger at God and even at the dead child), crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help, if necessary), the loneliness will lessen and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought to be gone forever. Each

one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery, in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear not to return, does not occur, even though the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing", meaning a process whereby our lives return to what is now that be normal for us. Healing implies our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and our learning to slowly resume productive relationships with others. This is all done while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work (refusing to face our bereaved state), but we cannot stop it!

One of the greatest hindrances to our health is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten by others. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time.

A major obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive: ourselves, the dead child, others involved in the child's death, even God, if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if necessary), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living.

No matter where you are in the journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child.

—Robert Gloor, MD Tuscaloosa, AL

"Life is eternal,  
And love is immortal,  
And death is only a horizon: And a horizon is  
nothing save the limit of our own sight."

--Rossiter Worthington Raymond

## FEBRUARY: an Arrow Through the Heart



In the month of February, we are still in the firm grip of winter. Bone-chilling winds whip around bleak, bare trees, gray days alternate with bright, blue skies, but give little warmth. Having survived January, we have learned to conserve our energy, and we have grown accustomed to the weather.

Though we may still intensely dislike the wintertime, we have learned to take pleasure in the bright sun and the clear, blue sky. The stark landscape may even be appreciated for its unique beauty.

Why does this happen? Why do we accept the bundling up and the shivering of winter? How is it that we can find pleasure and beauty in our misery? The answer is a paradox; We have a choice, and we have no choice. We can continue to wish for balmy air, laden with the scent of flowers, or we can mumble about the cold and grumble about the necessity for bundling up to face the chilly days.

If we focus only on what we don't have, or long for the past warmth of summer or the future rebirth of spring, we tend to lose any ability to notice the aspects of this month that might engender some pleasure.

Try as we might, it is impossible to change the course of nature. We cannot bring back the summer anymore than we can fast-forward the seasons. By focusing on what no longer is, we lose the capacity to find beauty, happiness, or pleasure. If we continue to bang our heads against unchangeable situations, it only increases our feelings of helplessness and futility.

Our alternative is acceptance. By February, we recognize that hoping, wishing, and dreaming will not bring back the summer's warmth, so we accept what is. We learn to live with reality of the situation. It's not that we don't remember the various beautiful times of the summer, it's not that we don't yearn at times for them again; but now, we recognize that has passed. Though our souls may be warmed by the memories of summer, summer is gone.

Now, we are free to live in the reality that is today. We enable ourselves to find beauty and

joy in February. The mid-winter landscape has a quieter and more tranquil beauty. Rarely flamboyant, it does not overwhelm the senses: and the ability to recognize and appreciate this soft beauty can give us a sense of peace.

The month of February is similar to the completion of that long, middle phase of bereavement that results in acceptance of what has occurred. The memories of precious times will always be there to warm our hearts, and they will continue to bring tears and pangs of yearning, but realization of the finality of the loss had also occurred. It takes a long time to accept situations that we do not want as permanent. It takes much time and heartache to recognize that we cannot change situations. It is a long process during which evolves a changed concept of ourselves, the world, and our place in it.

It is not that the world has really changed, but with the death of a loved one OUR world has changed. Again, we have a choice. That long and painful middle portion of the bereavement process may remain with us for a very long time as we struggle to maintain our old ways of being in spite of the agonizing loss. If we become fixed or stuck at this time, there is a double tragedy. Life is lived in the past, and the present is filled with yearning for what should have been and what has been stolen from the survivor. Certainly, we are not "happy" about the situation, but slowly we realize that things will never again be the same and that as survivors, we must go on. After a time, which varies from situation to situation, we accept the finality of the loss. With this acceptance, the ability occurs to perceive beauty without feelings of disloyalty.

Though Valentine's Day does not have the same tradition and resultant dread of Christmas and other holidays, it can still bring a great deal of pain. The very symbol of this day, Cupid's arrow piercing the heart, can feel quite literal for the bereaved whose hearts feel as if they have been broken. Old, tattered, cherished cards will be wept over, as well as bits of lace, red satin ribbon, and the poetry of a spouse, parent, or sibling that is especially precious.

Red roses and red valentine hearts are symbolic of the invisible blood that the bereaved have shed over their loss. When we feel despondent, isolated or cheated on Valentine's Day (or any other day), the pain we are feeling

is because of the great love we had. The experience of that love will never die, the memory of that love, of that loved one, will live on in our hearts.

We must now live on-for the sake of ourselves and our loved one. We must give ourselves permission to enjoy again, even through tears. Let's remind ourselves of the blessings that we have had, despite the deprivation, and let's not deny others their blessings.

We should seek things that will bring us peace. A snow-covered landscape can be beautiful, glistening, and pure. Any view of the situation takes on the meaning that we assign to it. If we choose to believe that a scene or a situation is bleak, it will be bleak. If we focus on one aspect of beauty, we see beauty. NO THERE ISN'T THE COMPLETENESS OF FORMER TIMES, BUT THERE IS TODAY.

-- Susan Arlen, M.D.

Dr. Arlen is the medical director of the Hospice at Somerset Medical Center. She is board certified in rehabilitation medicine, and she is a psychotherapist, specializing in the losses associated with death, disability, and life-changing illness.

## Special Days

With Valentine's Day approaching, we are once again faced with the fact that our loved ones are gone at a special time of the year - no more wacky notes, no more silly or romantically beautiful cards, no more flowers and candy, no more special looks and smiles that wordlessly say so much. The special way we acknowledged Valentine's Day with our loved ones is only a memory now. Even if we never especially noticed or celebrated Valentine's Day before, we are still faced with change - realizing that the opportunity to make the day special for our loved ones is gone, too.

Now we are engulfed in sadness and loneliness with confusing thoughts, moods, and feelings whirling around us. We may feel like a storm has caught us in its midst and will never release us. All our relationships with the people around us-family members, co-workers, friends-have changed, taking on new colors and tones. We seek things we cannot seem to grasp-clarity of thought, daily routines we followed so easily in

the past, a sense of security, peacefulness, loving and being loved by the one who has died. We beat ourselves with the "I should have" and the "if onlys." We know death has changed us, and our whole world is different now. Out of the wreckage of our sadness how can we find the ability to acknowledge our loved ones in a special way on Valentine's Day?

Whether our memories of this day in years past are fond (or perhaps even painful with unfulfilled wishes, expectations, and promises), we can begin to recognize the simplest and perhaps most meaningful view of Valentine's Day. We can begin to love ourselves more deeply and truly and offer this as a memorial to the death of our beloved child, all of which takes more effort than we may at first realize.

We must be willing to look deep into ourselves— beneath our loneliness, pain, guilt, and self-accusations. We must be willing to find our self-love, self-kindness and self-compassion, to begin to smile again at memories of that special person who now lies deep in our heart. And we must allow ourselves to relinquish some of our anger at being powerless and less than perfect.

We can take this journey searching through the layers of our personality until we see and give tribute to our wisdom, serenity, faith, and understanding. We can love ourselves and allow ourselves to be loved. This may be the greatest contribution our loved one's death makes in our lives - freeing us to live and love more fully in their memories.

--Patricia C. Andrus, Lafayette, LA



"In this world of ours sorrow comes to all....it comes with bittersweet agony ... Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better.... and yet this is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say."

-- Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln had four sons. Edward died at age 4. William died at age 11. Thomas "Todd" died at age 18.



## The Old Mom

During our meeting, one mother stated that her teenage daughter said, "You're not like the old mom."

Recently, I overheard two friends who had not seen each other in a year. After awhile one said to the other, "Well, you haven't changed any."

Is that what is so threatening about bereaved parents? We've changed. The status quo provides predictability, stability, and security. Change is a loss of predictability, a disequilibrium. Our friends, neighbors, coworkers, family, and children want us back as quickly as possible. But the "old us" will never return.

Any major event in one's life - marriage, birth, death - brings about change, and we are never our "old selves" again. But, in time, our "new selves" can be better, more loving, more sensitive, understanding, and compassionate. Adversity brings either bitterness or betterment. No major event leaves us unchanged.

--TCF, Greater Ozarks Chapter, Springfield, IL

## Ten Self-Compassionate Principles: The Mourner's Code

Though you should reach out to others as you journey through grief, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you. The following list is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. When you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.
2. You have the right to talk about your grief. Talking about grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want as often as you want. You also have the right to be silent.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions. Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, and relief are a few of the emotions you might

feel. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry is wrong. Find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feeling of loss will probably leave you fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest, eat balanced meals. Don't allow others to push you into things you don't feel ready for.

5. You have the right to experience "griefbursts". Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This is normal and natural.

6. You have the right to make use of ritual. The funeral helps provide you with the support of caring people. It is a way for you to mourn. Don't listen to those that tell you rituals are unnecessary.

7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate for you. Be around people who understand.

8. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking "Why"? Some questions may have answers others may not. Watch out for cliched responses. Comments like "It was God's will" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

9. You have the right to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of your child. Find others with whom you can share them.

10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Be patient and tolerant of yourself. Avoid people who are not tolerant with you.

--Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D, from *Understanding Your Grief, 2003*

"... It is not the struggle itself that lays us low. It is the day-in, day-out tenacious. Clinging to the amorphous anger, the depression, the unacceptability of it all that stands to defeat us in the end. When a loved one dies, we survive the death. The question is whether or not we will survive dealing with the death ..."

*Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope*  
By Joan D. Chittister

## Who Was That Person? An 8 Year Retrospective



Who was that person? He looks like me. He talks like me. But I don't think I know him anymore.

Who was that person? He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to, and that is enough. His telephone Rolodex is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person? He had such different priorities. He skated over life, like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he has a totally new perspective on the world. He reaches out to people who are hurt because he knows how they feel. He has been there. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person? He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before," and "after."

Who was that person? He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person? He used to worry about so many imaginary troubles, most of which never happened anyway. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, daisies, simple things, and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person? He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person? He used to measure his goals in terms of where he was going. Now he focuses more on what his life will have been about. He asks less and less why his child died, and more often: "Why did he live?"

Who was that person? He had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. Now they are his best friends. And he knows that by helping someone else through TCF, he also helps himself.

Who was that person? I don't think I know

him anymore.

--Rich Edler, TCF South Bay/L/A, California

### A Man

When I look in the mirror I see a middle aged man. His hair is thinning on top and beginning to turn gray on the sides. Lines and creases are starting to form at the corner of his eyes. It seems that his age may be starting to show. When I look in the mirror at this man I see much more. I see a lonely man that is hurting and angry inside. He's trying to grieve over the loss of someone very dear and special to him. Someone taken away by death with no warning, his life taken by his own hand. It has left a big emptiness inside him.

He sometimes wears a mask to hide the tears from the pain and anguish that he feels. Sometimes he's afraid to let others know exactly how he feels, afraid of what they'll say to him, afraid of their reaction to him.

He just wishes things were different. He wishes it would all go away. He wishes he could wake up in the morning and realize it has all been a bad dream.

When he's out in public he hopes it doesn't show. He hopes the tears don't come to his eyes. He hopes his anger doesn't come out. So he tries as hard as he can to hold back the tears. After all a real man is not suppose to cry. So he hides behind his mask.

He manages to suppress his anger. He saves it for when he's alone then he finds ways to release it to keep from hurting others and to keep from lashing out at them for no reason. So if you see me out and about and you manage to see a tear in my eye, don't criticize me, judge me, or stereotype me. Real men do cry and sometimes it is difficult not to. Don't tell me things like "enough is enough", or that "it's time to get on with your life. "Don't tell me, "it's been long enough, that I should be over it." It just doesn't work that way. Life will never be the same again, and you never get over it.

Listen to me but don't condemn me. Don't feel sorry for me, feel with me. Don't shy away from me, but help me carry this load. Be there for me when I need someone to talk to. Tell me I don't need to hide behind my mask. Tell me it's ok to feel the way I feel. Tell me it's ok for me to

cry. Tell me it's ok to feel the anger. Most of all tell me you'll help me through this nightmare of life.

--Lloyd E. Carson

## JASON

Jason's a little boy who walks with me that nobody sees,

Jason's the child that talks to me but nobody hears.

Jason's the boy who dries my tears when I cry,

And Jason helps me go on when I want to quit.

Jason is never seen or heard by others, But I see him and I hear him.

Jason was my little boy, you see.

He lives with God, but he also lives with me.

-- Tracy Helmick

(Tracy's 3-year-old son, Jason, was born 5/28/82 and died 10/28/85 after being hit by a vehicle.)



## For Friends and Family...

### Listen

If I am pained and come to you, Before you speak, consider twice.

"Shoulds" and platitudes won't do.

I want your ear, not your advice.

Just listen, friend, and try to hear Beyond my words ... (the stuff I hide).

The outward rage is Oh! so mere Compared to all the hurt inside.

If you would only say to me,

"That must have been so hard for you."

Instead of tossing off a line like,

"Here's the thing that I would do ...

Tune in to how I feel, my friend,

And hear beyond the words I say.

At times my words may not describe

Emotions deep, held down at bay.

These deeper feelings kept within

Are journeys words can't take you to.

But travel past the things you hear,

Don't say, "Don't let it bother you."

Please try to listen with your heart

Don't seize this chance to criticize,

Or preach to me, or even start

With trite cliches that sermonize.

If you've not walked my lonely road (I hope you never will, my friend),

Don't try to be my therapist

Or say it's time my grief should end.

Listen! Listen! Be a friend!

Command compassion to your ears

To sift the weight of words I say

And hear unspoken tears and fears.

Most times your silence suits me fine,

Or weep with me, that's soothing, too.

To heal this broken heart of mine,

Just LISTEN when I talk to you

--Fran Morgan Deer Park, NY

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## Newly Bereaved ...

### Compassion

I cry, when a tear rolls down your cheek

I agonize when you weep.

I know that you question, I know that you pray,

That you scream at night in your sleep.

I'm aware of your quavering voice when you speak,

Of your blank, straightforward stare,

I know of your pain, your depression, your guilt

That you search for "a face" everywhere.

I watch as you walk with your head bowed low

With despair written over your face.

I hear the quick sign, the internal cry

I know how, you wearily pace.

I see how you search, for a sign, for some hope

That the light will still shine in your life.

I know how you live, I know that you die

From the harsh words that wound like a knife.

I empathize most with your loneliness now

Even though you're not always alone.

I see the rapture as you speak your child's

name

For I've lost a son of my own.

-- Charmaine Stickel TCF Pittsburgh, PA

**Welcome ...****You Said**

You said, "I can never live without him." I said, "You will find a way."

You said, "This pain will break me." I said, "Allow it, it will lessen."

You said "No one knows how I feel" I said, "You are very right."

You said, "I will never heal." I said, "You will."

You said, "Tell me how." I said, "I don't know your way, but I will come with you."

You said, "Tell me when." I said I don't know, but I'll be there."

You said, "Why did this happen?" I said, "Some questions have no answers."

You said, "I want to die." I said, "I understand."

You said, "I have to live." I said, "I know."

-- Bereavement Magazine, 4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917

**Helpful Hint...****The Shirt in the Clothes Hamper**

The shirt was at the bottom of the dirty clothes hamper when he died. I found it there when I got around to doing wash some time after the funeral. Life must go on in spite of what happens to us, and the wash is part of ordinary day-to-day life.

It was natural for it to be there - I'd done his wash since he was born twenty-one years before. I stood and looked at it and decided to leave it there.

Year after year, wash after wash, I left it there. I liked seeing it there. It was a symbol of normal life. My life wasn't normal anymore, and I left it there to sort of hang onto the past, I guess. It gave me comfort to see such an ordinary, normal thing as one of his shirts in the dirty clothes when my life was so extraordinary now.

One by one such "hangings on" are done away with as we slowly reenter life's mainstream. We know the time is right for these habits to go if we don't grieve for their going when it happens. And the leaving must happen, just as we also must move forward eventually.

One day in a fit of neatness, my daughter did the wash, and she washed *the shirt*. It must

have been five years after her brother died. I felt a tiny surprise when I saw the shirt hanging clean in the closet. But, I didn't feel sorrow or even disappointment. The time seemed to be right for it to leave the dirty clothes hamper. A simple thing, but it was a symbol of progress of sorts. I'm glad no one rushed me - I would have resented it. I was allowed this simple idiosyncrasy until it was natural to give it up.

Left alone, I probably never would have removed it - just left it there, never really knowing why. But when the shirt was removed ... when it happened, I know I was getting better. Finally I was letting go, and that was okay.

--Fay Harden TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

**Book Review ...**

*From Erin with Love*, by Helen M. Fisher.

Erin was diagnosed with Hodgkin Disease at the age of twenty while a junior in college. She wrote of her experiences and feelings during her battle. Her mother wrote this book to complete Erin's work, help others, and to say that death is not the end; it is a transition and that contact is possible between these dimensions.

--Book review by Cheryl Groth

**Silk Roses for Susan**

I took silk roses to your grave today.  
Valentine's Day is coming  
And you loved red roses  
I stayed there awhile and remembered  
Your last Valentine's Day.  
I kissed you and gave you candy  
With money stuck in the top.  
You tilted your head  
In that certain way you had  
And smiled, pleased at the gift.  
Sweet daughter, I miss you so.  
There was still much of life to share.  
Nineteen is way too young for dying.  
I would pick fresh roses for you every day  
If I could have you back.  
But I can't change the ending.  
So I took silk roses to your grave today,  
And cried fresh tears instead.

--Ginger Elwood TCF, Knoxville, TN

## A Look At You

I was not prepared for it;  
I thought I 'd put all your pictures  
In predictable places  
Where I wouldn't be knifed by them,  
Unexpectedly,  
Ripped apart by our separation.  
So I was not prepared  
When all of a sudden,  
Your face appeared  
In a photo I hadn't even known existed  
And which had fallen, unseen,  
Into an envelope  
Of some ordinary-looking papers.  
Extraordinary! Your little face-  
Your funny face. And funny hair-  
The happy gleam in your eyes  
And the sand clinging to your wet legs ...  
Of course! That day at the shore  
The sound of it, the smell of it  
The feel of you all comes back.  
Every fiber of my mother's being  
Leaps with the memory of every inch and fold,  
And curve, and round, of your toddler's body.  
And I long for you ... And the dam breaks.  
The uncontrolled sobbing. Released.  
All the wailing spent. Our life has gone on  
As though - almost - you hadn't existed.  
Yet the longing in my heart  
Testifies that - I will say it-  
You were my life.  
And I don't know what to do - Without you.  
With the pain of having known you  
And lost you.  
And with becoming impatient of  
ever seeing you again.  
I don't know how to do it-  
How to live without you  
But every day that I do it  
- I guess I am learning.  
--Beth Cokeley TCF, Mercer Area, NJ



But then one day I came upon a man  
who'd also lost his son.  
I found that things I ran from  
he wouldn't even shun,  
But rather, he would treasure.  
When I said I wondered why,  
He told me that he called them  
"catching butterflies."  
This view of his intrigued me;  
I wanted to hear more.  
I learned that he took all of them  
and carefully would store.  
All of the reminders  
that I would push away,  
he would tuck deep down inside his heart  
each and every day.  
Now a name of likeness  
when catching me off guard  
does not upset me as it did,  
and I don't find it hard.  
For now instead I see these times  
as opportunities  
To see my son awakened  
in these fresh new memories.  
--Dottie Williams TCF Pittsburgh, PA

"Listening can turn grief into growth. We do not take grief away from people; we simply help them walk through it – by talking it out. They need to talk to be a good listener. A good listener is a walking, touching personal intensive care unit."  
--Comforting Those Who Grieve: A Guide for Helping Others by Dough Manning, from a chapter entitled "Listen"

Each day, as I push forward,  
I move a step ahead and then back,  
but still gaining,  
if even but a little.  
--Mary Rapke, TCF Grand Junction, CO



The South Bay/L.A. Chapter of  
The Compassionate Friends would like to thank  
the following families for their year-end donations  
to help support our chapter:



## Untitled

It often hurt to come upon  
reminders of my son,  
'tho often since I lost him  
I would search around for one  
which always brought on sadness.  
The tears that I would shed  
were caused by names or faces,  
all things that I would dread.

Gail Megaloudis Rongen in memory of Nicole Megaloudis  
Pauline Cleary Basil in memory of John Cleary  
Norman & Karen Sakura in memory of Andrew Sakura  
Burton & Jania Pizer in memory of Jennifer Pizer



## 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: 7/005  
Parents: Dave Alvarez & Sandy Murphy

Robert H. Apodaca  
Born: 12/55 Died: 9/89  
Mother: Margaret Hall  
Father: Al Apodaca

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

Brandon Armstrong  
Miscarried: June 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

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

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 Bryan  
Born: 10/84 Died: 6/96  
Mother: Karen Merickel &  
Robert Bryan

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

Tony Burack  
Born: 12/63 Died: 12/87  
Parents: Rita & Herb Burack

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

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

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

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



## Our Children Remembered



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

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

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 Thhorn 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

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

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

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

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 Frazee  
Born: 5/79 Died: 7/07  
Mother: Kathy Cammarano

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

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

Ricardo Ramon Gallegos JR.  
Born: 4/85 Died: 2/02  
Mother: Sheri Schrier

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

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  
Brn: 6/66 Died: 7/11  
Father: John Geraci

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

Robert Hashimoto Jr  
Born: 5/66 Died: 5/92  
Parents: Robert & Shirley  
Hashimoto

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

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 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

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 Lauthere  
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96  
Parents: Larry & Chris Lauthere

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



## Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anthony "Tony" Low  
Born: 1/46 Died: 3/99  
Parents: Frances & Matthew Low

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Our Children Remembered



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

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

Shannon Quigly  
Born: 112/68 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

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

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 Roque  
Born: 8/02 Died: 1/09  
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

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

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

Shaulamit Rose Scher-Gilfert  
Born: 12/08 Died: 12/08  
Mother: Aliza Scher  
Grandmother: Adrienne Scher

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

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

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

Jeff Eric Snowden  
Born: 2/61 Died: 6/01  
Parents: Daryle & Sandra  
Snowden

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Our Children**

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

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: 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

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

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

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

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

**Remembered**

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.)

Sorry, no birthday tributes were submitted this month.

**For Siblings ...****Brother-Sister Bond Showed Itself on Valentine's Day**

A couple of years after my son Michael died, I was sorting through some things which I had saved from our children's school years. I came across a Valentine card which depicts a little girl surrounded by heart symbols. "Stuck on you Valentine!" the card reads. On the back of the card is seven-year-old Michael's hand-written signature. The card was to his big sister Kelly.

The emotional bond between Kelly and Michael was formed very early. Almost three years older, Kelly was excited about the prospect of welcoming her new brother into the world. When I was pregnant with Michael, we didn't know the baby's gender in advance. "It's not a girl," Kelly had insisted. "He's my brother, and his name is Michael!"

The relationship between our two children was not unlike that of many other healthy siblings. Kelly and Michael were daily companions and playmates during the early years. They had their bouts of sibling rivalry, too, which on some days would drive me insane! Their love for each other was solid, however. On one particular evening, after a day of almost non-stop arguing between the two of them, while they were lying in their beds I heard, "Night Mike, I love you!" "Night Kelly, I love you!"

At age 19, Michael died in an automobile accident while Kelly was away at college. Kelly has had to

learn how to be an only child. She has had to define for herself a new identity, a difficult task as a young adult. I am confident that the bond which was formed between them will remain forever.

Kelly is married and shares her new home with her husband and an adorable Pug named Otto. They occasionally spend a weekend at our house and sleep in Kelly's old bedroom, where Michael's "Stuck on you Valentine!" card can still be found on the night stand as a symbol of a bond that will never die.

By Anne Dionne – TCF Online Community Services

## For Grandparents...



### When You Lose A Grandchild

When you lose a grandchild, the grandparent is twice bereaved. Once for the grandchild in whom you can no longer take delight, be proud of and love, whose future you will never be able to watch unfold; the second, is for your grown children, the parents, who cannot imagine a future at all without their child, but who are attempting to go on in excruciating pain and whom you are powerless to console.

One loss leaves a constant and gnawing void in your life. The other brings a constant challenge to your heart—which aches for all of them.

--Lorell Thompson, Phoenix, AZ  
Grandmom to David Samson (1982-1998)

## From Our Members...



### To My Brother Neil

They say that time heals all pain. Well, I'm still waiting. The pain that I feel inside my heart and soul is so heavy. At times it feels so hard to breathe. Not a moment or a day goes by that I don't think of you. I miss you so much. I love you more than life itself. It hurts so bad sometimes that I just sit and cry. How can I go on without you? Because you are the missing piece of my heart and without you I just don't know where to start. It hurts more knowing

you're so far away, and I'm so sad and gray.

With love from your sister, Loretta

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.

### TCF 2012 National and International

**Conference...**The Compassionate Friends/USA, is pleased to announce that, in conjunction with the 35th National Conference, it will also be hosting The Compassionate Friends 5th International Gathering. The combined conference will be held July 20-22, 2012 in beautiful Costa Mesa, California.

Because many people will be traveling long distances from countries around the world, special excursions are being planned for before and after the conference, so everyone is invited to combine their stay with visits to some of California's great attractions.

You can now make reservations for the conference hotel. Although The Compassionate Friends has arranged a room block for the conference that includes every room within the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa hotel, we recommend that you reserve your room early if you wish to stay at the host hotel. Because our national conference includes the International Gathering, there is little doubt that all rooms will be filled. Room charge is \$129 per night plus tax of approximately 11%. The room block is available July 17-24. You can also receive the special room rate July 14-16 and July 25-27, but subject to more limited availability. Rooms are King Size (holds 2, roll-away bed available for \$10 per night) or double queen (maximum 4 per room).

To reserve your room online, please go to Online Reservations at

[www.CompassionateFriends.org](http://www.CompassionateFriends.org).

Please note that the first night's deposit is required at the time you reserve your room. Should your plans change, this deposit will be refunded as long as the room is cancelled at least one day prior to the start of your reservation. You can also call your reservation directly to the hotel at 714-540-7000. Room block reservations will be taken until June 26th or until the room block is sold out, whichever comes first. If the room block sells out, as we anticipate, we will advise you regarding overflow hotels.



**We Need Your Help...** The 2012 Conference Planning Committee has started planing for next years conference. Our chapter is in charge of the Volunteer desk, and the Hospitality and Reflection Rooms.

Because it will be held so close to home, we strongly recommend that you start making plans now to attend. Registration and hotel reservations can now be made for the conference. Right now, we are looking for people to sign up to volunteer at the conference. There are many jobs, both big and small that need to be done. Could you sit at a table and answer questions? Restock refreshments in the Hospitality Room? Help put together a video of children's pictures? Can we count on you to help?

We would love to include as many members of our chapter as we can to help the conference be a huge success. This is a rewarding undertaking that we can do to honor our children and to help the newly bereaved... Please help us make this one of the best conferences TCF has ever had. Please call Kitty Edler at (310) 541-8221 or E-mail her at [KittyEdler@aol.com](mailto:KittyEdler@aol.com) for more information.

**TCF Now 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](http://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 such as conferences, the Walk to Remember, and the Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please visit often and contribute to the conversation.

**Our Website...** We are now posting a tribute page for each of our children. Please visit the new 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@tcsbla.org](mailto:crystal@tcsbla.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](http://www.health.voiceamerica.com) every Thursday at noon EST and are also archived on the TCF national website. Shows are also broadcast at 11 a.m. EST Sundays on a number of radio stations across the country and streamed online simultaneously at [www.HealthRadioNetwork.com](http://www.HealthRadioNetwork.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: Feb.1 for March 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  
 Sue Gardner..... (310) 316-3777

**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. 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

**TRINITY CARE HOSPICE:** Bereavement Coordinator Gayle Kirma (310) 257-3567

**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

**BEREAVEMENT MAGAZINE:** Articles for all types of grief. Bereavement Publishing, Inc., 4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917  
**OUR HOUSE/BEREAVEMENT HOUSE:** 1950 Sawtelle Blvd., Suite 255, L.A., CA General bereavement and bereavement for children. (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

**THE GATHERING PLACE:** Various support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens,(also Spanish). Call Claire Towle (310) 374-6323, Beach Cities Health Dist

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

### **LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS**

**Los Angeles:** (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.

**Orange Coast/Irvine:** (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.

**Orange Co./Anaheim:** (714) 993-6708

**Pomona/San Gabriel:** (626) 919-7206

**Redlands:** (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.

**Riverside-Inland Empire:** (909) 683-4160

**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:**

Post Net Printing for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to Reverend Karl Johnson and the Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

### **STEERING COMMITTEE OFFICERS:**

CHAPTER LEADER: Cheryl Stephens

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOF READER: Becky Jordan

TREASURER: Ken Konopasek

CARDS & WEBSITE: Crystal Henning

NEW MEMBER FOLLOW-UP: Cheryl Stephens



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

In loving memory of Brandon Armstrong and Dominique Oliver ... 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 Tommy Villanueva, 10/68 - 5/02. We miss you. You are always in our thoughts and forever in our heart.  
Love, Mom and Dad

In loving memory of Kevin Zelik, 11/85 - 6/10. Kevin, we'll particularly miss you this Christmas season. You're always in our thoughts and prayers. We know you're around us because we often feel you love for us.  
We love you, Mom, Dad & Jeanine

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.

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

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Through  
All the tears  
And the sadness  
And the Pain  
Comes the one thought  
That can Make me internally  
Smile again:  
I have Loved...

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**FEBRUARY 2012**

**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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