



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Families After a Child Dies



South Bay/L.A. Chapter



A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND FAMILIES

JANUARY 2013 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be January 2nd, 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)

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.

January 2nd ... This month's topic will start with "Thoughts on Facing The New Year While Grieving".

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

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

The TCF National Conference will be July 5 - 7th in Boston, MA

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January 2nd Meeting ... This month's topic will be "Thoughts on Facing The New Year While Grieving". Initially, after the death of a child, it is all you can do to survive. In the beginning you need to follow certain steps in order to exist. As time passes and you get further down the road in your grief, it will be time to again take stock and follow steps to continue with the next step in grief ... Living instead of just existing. Then, as even more time passes, you adapt to your new life and find grief resurfacing instead of being a constant companion. Different issues occur at different times in your grieving process.

Looking ahead to the New Year can seem overwhelming, especially if we think of facing it all at once. This meeting we will be talking about overcoming our fears and uncertainties of facing the new year while we learn to reinvest in life.

The Holidays Are Behind Us



It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out at a winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb- a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed, our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searching, find places of warmth and change and love and growth deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love of our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

--Marie Andrews, TCF, South Maryland Chapter

What Happens After Christmas?

"I spent a lot of energy anticipating and dreading the holidays," Chris told me over the phone one evening last week. "I pushed myself to be with people, even though I didn't want to be. I even shopped for presents and decorated the house as I had always done before Jim died. I guess it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be—though I have to tell you it wasn't great. But now I'm wondering, what happens after Christmas? What happens to me now that there aren't a lot of people visiting me, there are fewer distractions and there is much less running around? What happens now that I've worn myself out physically and emotionally trying to cope with the pain of my first Christmas without Jim? How can I get through these next few months?"

Chris's questions are very familiar to those suffering from the death of a loved one. There are many like Chris who have kept themselves overly busy, running from store-to-store or house-to-house, stuffing down old memories, traditions and expectations. They find that once the holidays are over, they are tired, nervous, distraught and fearful of the long winter months ahead of them.

We certainly can't change the nature of the winter that is upon us. No matter what we do, there will be days with fewer hours of sunlight. It will be cold, and snow and ice may well keep us inside more than we would like. Though none of that can be changed, what we can have complete control over is "slowing down" in mind and in body and giving ourselves some time to heal from the pain of loss.

Winter is, in itself, a "slow" time. Life seems to come to a halt for awhile; trees are bare and new life is dormant under snow-covered earth. There is a quiet that hangs on the air. It can be in the quietness, in this slow-paced expectancy of a spring that will eventually come, that we can begin to open ourselves to the gentle prodding of beginning a new life. But in order to do that, we must indeed "slow down."

We can truly do something with these days

after Christmas. They can be quiet times in which we can work at our healing and growth. The healing will never be perfect, and there will always be scars, because love has the capacity to leave scars. But the scars can produce a growth beyond just survival. The growing may be difficult. Indeed, the grieving was and is. But as nature survives the winter and moves into the freshness of a new spring, we, too, can use this time before us to begin to nurture ourselves, listen to our inner yearnings, and realize that this time can be put to growth.

What happens after Christmas? We take the time to pay attention to ourselves and to the possibility of using the cold and dreary months, as nature does, to begin to heal and grow. Spring always follows winter no matter how harsh that winter has been. So, too, can strength follow suffering, if we try to work through the suffering to new life.

--By Maureen O'Brien, Hamden, Connecticut
Manitoba TCF Newsletter; 2007

Endings And Beginnings

Each of us has just lived through the beginning and ending of the holiday season. If the death of your loved one was recent, every day is hard and the holidays may have been no more than a blur amidst the deep grief that already envelops your day. If, however, it has been several months or years since their death and you were having moments each day when the pain was not as sharp, where you may have found a reason or two to smile despite your sadness, the holidays may have brought all those initial feelings in all of their intensity back. You may feel as though you have lost any progress you had made. The very nature of grief is full of ups and downs, good days and bad, two steps forward and one-step back. Unexpectedly hearing our loved one's favorite song or smelling their cologne on someone can trigger waves of grief. Other times those same things can warm our heart as we re-experience feelings of the love between us. Special days when all the family gathers erase any denial, conscious or subconscious doubt that our loved one has died. Family photos when one member is conspicuously absent, the chair at the table now empty, a story they always shared no longer spoken, are an unmistakable, shouting, perhaps screaming at us that our love done has died, they

are not coming back, and we will never be the same.

We may feel very alone no matter how many other people are present. We may feel like an outsider and intruder on the celebration we are part of. Though others in the room may be feeling the same way and some of their gaiety fake, grief is a solitary journey, that others may support us through, but it is we who take the journey, it is our feelings we work through, it is our relationship with our loved one that has changed. Theirs may have changed also but it is ours we must struggle with and learn to live with in a way that makes life meaningful and joyful again.

Do not be hard on yourself for your sadness, tears, or your anger. These are normal reactions to the death of your loved one. They are the visual signs of what your loved one meant to you and the difficult adjustment to their absence. As time passes, pain softens. It doesn't ever completely go away. It remains part of the longing for what was and might have been but it will not always control your life. Talking about your loved one, talking to them, sharing memories, telling their stories, are ways of staying connected to them and keeping their memory alive, even though they died.

Being physically absent from them does not mean we have to be emotionally absent from them. They will always be a part of us. Acknowledging that and cherishing that is what makes living our life meaningful and enjoyable again. So treasure your memories and give them life by sharing them with others.

--Deb Kosmer, MSW, CSW, CT Bereavement Support Coordinator Affinity Visiting Nurses Hospice

"Hope"
is the thing
with feathers
that perches in the
soul
and sings the tune
without words
and never stops
at all.

--Emily Dickinson





New Years Goals

The holidays are over and I bet you're glad about that. You did make it through, and by now maybe some of the stress of that powerful time has left you. Next year you will find you learned from this year, no matter how many years it has been, and I hope it will be easier for you, too, in the years ahead.

If you made New Year's resolutions, I hope they included:

- To try and take it one day at a time;
- To forgive yourself for whatever it is you feel you did wrong;
- To figure out ways to resolve your anger so you can let go of it;
- To concentrate on and value what you have left, as much as what you have lost;
- To risk reinvestment in life;
- To let those you value know how important they are to you.

These are important steps forward. Try to be good to yourself in the new year.

--Long Beach Chpt., CA TCF newsletter

Time and Determination

Learning to live after losing a child is similar in many ways to an amputee learning to live with the loss of a limb. First, there is the tremendous shock of the loss, both emotional and physical. It's true that many parents actually feel physical pain upon the death of their child. Grieving is extremely hard on the body and can make a person weak and ill. It is also common to deny the fact that a part of you is gone. Some amputees have periods when they imagine their missing limb is still intact. Likewise, bereaved parents frequently imagine their child is still alive. They "see" the child at play or walking down the street, or they "hear" them drive up in their car. Then after the initial bereavement, like an amputee, the parent must begin the long, arduous task of accepting his loss, and begin the therapy he/she needs to become a useful person once again. Many times it's tempting to say, "I quit! I don't care if I live again." Of course life will never be the same again, whether it is due to the loss of a limb or the death of a child, but with time and work, life can take on a new, much different quality. For example, the amputee knows he can't run up steps two at a time, but takes satisfaction

in knowing he CAN make it to the top in his own way, even if it takes longer. The bereaved parent knows that life will never rush on at the carefree pace it once did. Now each day plods on, and tasks once done without a thought take total concentration. But they CAN BE DONE! Our lives CAN become full again.

For the amputee, the raw and bleeding stump heals and the physical pain goes away. But he lives with the pain in his heart, knowing his limb will not grow back. He has to learn to live without it and rebuild his life around his loss. Bereaved parents must do the same. In time the pain in our hearts will gradually ease, and we can learn to live again without our beloved child. Our lives will never be whole, but they can become full once more. The keys for both the amputee and the bereaved parent are TIME AND DETERMINATION!!!

--Washington County Chapter, Potosi, MO

After the First Year, Thoughts For the Bereaved

The first year of bereavement brings raw pain, disbelief, reality, and many other deep emotions. Emotions many of us have never experienced or at least not to the same depth. The time period after the first year is usually not quite as pain filled as all the firsts were. Although we may be a little better, often we are not nearly as healed as we would like. It helps to understand this next period and to learn some skills for coping. It is most helpful if we lower our expectations of ourselves and work on our grief. Remember grief is different for everyone. It is like fingerprints or snowflakes, no two are alike, Everyone grieves differently so don't compare yourself to others or place yourself on a timetable. Some of the following suggestions/observations may help you:

1. Beware of becoming critical of ourselves, either consciously or unconsciously, due to unrealistic expectations.
2. A different level of reality may hit us. We usually no longer deny the death, but now face the reality and its long run implications.
3. If the death was unexpected, some say that the second year is even more difficult.
4. It may be the time to struggle with a new life pattern. We may have handled grief by over-activity or becoming a workaholic, etc. If our

previous style of grieving has not been helpful we must be willing to try new approaches such as: becoming more active in a support group, finding telephone friends, reading about grief, developing coping skills, becoming determined not to become stuck in our grief.

5. It is so important to find friends with whom we may talk. This is the one significant factor that prevents people from sliding into deep depression.

6. We should carefully consider the phases of grief. Subconsciously one or more phases may be giving us trouble such as anger/guilt. If so, recognize the phase and work on it. Don't push it down or ignore it.

7. Other events in your life may also be grief situations (trouble with spouse, children, work, other family members, or friends.) Realize this happens to many grieving people and it does complicate your grief.

8. You may not cry as often but when you do, realize it is therapeutic. Don't fight the tears. As the author Jean G. Jones says, "Cry when you have to - laugh when you can."

9. Physical symptoms may become more severe (stomach disorders, headaches, sleeplessness, etc.) Have a checkup.

10. Insufficient sleep plagues many bereaved. It may be helpful to give up all caffeine (colas, coffee, tea, Anacin, etc.) Beware of alcohol, which is a depressant. Some findings indicate that alcohol causes insomnia. Physical exercise helps to relax and tire one. Often bereaved awaken very early or during the middle of the night. Sometimes it helps to go to bed earlier.

11. Check frequently that you have balance in your life - rest, read, recreation (including exercise), and work.

12. Depression may enter your life again or for the first time. Coping with the depression is very difficult. Again we need determination, understanding friends, and possibly the help of a professional counselor if our depression is deep and long.

13. Our grief may seem "out of control." We may feel as if "we are going crazy." This is common in bereaved people. It is important to realize grief work takes time. Much more time than we think it should. Be patient with yourself.

14. Be a "fighter" against giving up and becoming stuck in grief as 15% do. A determination to work through grief may be one of the common denominators of those who recover.

15. We had no choice when our loved one died, but we do have a choice to get better. It may be the hardest work we will ever perform.

--Jean G. Jones Orange Coast, CA TCF

Older Grief



Older Grief Is Gentler

It's about sudden tears swept in by a strand of music

It's about haunting echoes of first pain at anniversaries.

It's about feeling his presence for an instant one day while I'm dusting his room.

It's about early pictures that invite me to fold him in my arms again.

It's about memories blown in on wisps of wood smoke and sea scents.

Older grief is about aching in gentler ways, rarer longing, less engulfing fire.

Older grief is about searing pain wrought into tenderness.

-Linda Zalenka TCF, Orange Park, Florida

The best bridge between hope and despair is often a good night's sleep.

--Anchorage Alaska TCF newsletter

Suicide grief: Healing after a loved one's suicide

By Mayo Clinic staff

When a loved one commits suicide, overwhelming emotions can leave you reeling. Your grief might be heart wrenching. At the same time, you might be consumed by guilt - wondering if you could have done something to prevent your loved one's death.

As you face life after a loved one's suicide, remember that you don't have to go through it alone.

Brace for powerful emotions

A loved one's suicide can trigger intense emotions. For example:

- Shock. Disbelief and emotional numbness might set in. You might think that your loved one's suicide couldn't possibly be real.
- Anger. You might be angry with your loved one for abandoning you or leaving you with a legacy of grief - or angry with yourself or others for missing clues about suicidal intentions.
- Guilt. You might replay "what if" and "if only"

scenarios in your mind, blaming yourself for your loved one's death.

- Despair. You might be gripped by sadness, loneliness or helplessness. You might have a physical collapse or even consider suicide yourself.

You might continue to experience intense reactions during the weeks and months after your loved one's suicide - including nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty concentrating, social withdrawal and loss of interest in usual activities - especially if you witnessed or discovered the suicide.

Adopt healthy coping strategies

The aftermath of a loved one's suicide can be physically and emotionally exhausting. As you work through your grief, be careful to protect your own well-being.

- Keep in touch. Reach out to loved ones, friends and spiritual leaders for comfort, understanding and healing. Surrounding yourself with people who are willing to listen when you need to talk, as well as those who'll simply offer a shoulder to lean on when you'd rather be silent.
- Grieve in your own way. Do what's right for you, not necessarily someone else. If you find it too painful to visit your loved one's gravesite or share the details of your loved one's death, wait until you're ready.
- Be prepared for painful reminders. Anniversaries, holidays and other special occasions can be painful reminders of your loved one's suicide. Don't chide yourself for being sad or mournful. Instead, consider changing or suspending family traditions that are too painful to continue.
- Don't rush yourself. Losing someone to suicide is a tremendous blow, and healing must occur at its own pace. Don't be hurried by anyone else's expectations that it's been "long enough."
- Expect setbacks. Some days will be better than others, even years after the suicide - and that's OK. Healing doesn't often happen in a straight line.
- Consider a support group for families affected by suicide. Sharing your story with others who are experiencing the same type of grief might help you find a sense of purpose or strength.
- Know when to seek professional help. If you experience intense or unrelenting anguish or

physical problems, ask your doctor or mental health provider for help. Seeking professional help is especially important if you think you might be depressed or you have recurring thoughts of suicide. Keep in mind that unresolved grief can turn into complicated grief, where painful emotions are so long lasting and severe that you have trouble resuming your own life.

- Depending on the circumstances, you might benefit from individual or family therapy - either to get you through the worst of the crisis or to help you adjust to life after suicide. Short-term medication can be helpful in some cases, too.
- Face the future with a sense of peace. In the aftermath of a loved one's suicide, you might feel like you can't go on or that you'll never enjoy life again. In truth, you might always wonder why it happened - and reminders might trigger painful feelings even years later. Eventually, however, the raw intensity of your grief will fade. The tragedy of the suicide won't dominate your days and nights.
- Understanding the complicated legacy of suicide and how to cope with palpable grief can help you reach inner peace and healing, while still honoring the memory of your loved one.

--This article can be found on the Mayo Clinic website: www.mayoclinic.com/health/suicide/MH00048/

Infants ... To Those Who Don't Understand Me



I know you think it's morbid that I have pictures of my stillborn daughter. I know you think I'm crazy for hugging and holding her blanket to my chest. I know you think I'm weird for not washing the cap she wore with the tiny streaks of dried blood upon it, and for putting it against my face to smell it.

I know you think I'm sick for dressing her and holding a funeral for her. Now please let me tell you how I felt and just maybe you'll understand. The pictures are all I have to look at since she is not here for me to see. The blanket is the only thing I have to hug and hold since she is not here for me to hold and cuddle. The cap has her scent and it was the only article of clothing that ever touched her skin. To wash it would be to take away her scent.

I had her dressed because she was a human being just like you and me at birth. I know I wouldn't want to be buried naked and so why should she?

I had a funeral for her because she was very much alive for nine months within me and I felt her life. She deserved to be acknowledged as a human being that departed from this world. She deserved this last farewell.

So, you see, I did all of these things to acknowledge her existence. If I didn't do these things it would be like saying she never existed and nine months of my life never existed.

It really doesn't matter what you think. It's what I think that matters because I'm the one that lost my daughter and I think that everything I did, and everything I do, is quite normal. I do what comforts me and gets me through this loss! These things I did or do now from time to time, to feel good- and they feel right to me, and that is what's important.

--Shelley Beck, Anne Arundel MD

For Friends and Family...



This Is My Path, Not a Path of Choice

This is my path. It was not a path of my choice, but it is a path I must walk mindfully with intention. It is a journey through grief that takes time.

Every cell in my body aches and longs to be with my beloved child. I may be impatient, distracted, frustrated, and unfocused. I may get angry more easily, or I may seem hopeless. I will shed many, many, many tears. I won't smile as often as my old self. Smiling hurts now. Most everything hurts some days, even breathing. But please, just sit beside me. Say nothing. Do not offer a cure. Or a pill, or a word, or a potion. Witness my suffering and don't turn away from me.

Please be gentle with me. Please, self, be gentle with me, too. I will not ever "get over it" so please don't urge me down that path. Even if it seems like I am having a good day, maybe I am even able to smile for a moment, the pain is just beneath the surface of my skin. Some days, I feel paralyzed. My chest has a nearly constant sinking pain and sometimes I feel as if I will explode from

the grief.

This is affecting me as a woman, a mother, a human being. It affects every aspect of me: spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. I barely recognize myself in the mirror anymore. Remember that grief is as personal to each individual as a fingerprint.

Don't tell me how I should or shouldn't be doing it or that I should or shouldn't "feel better by now." Don't tell me what's right or wrong. I'm doing it my way, in my time. If I am to survive this, I must do what is best for me.

Surviving this means seeing life's meaning change and evolve. What I knew to be true or absolute or real or fair about the world has been challenged so I'm finding my way, moment-to-moment in this new place. Things that once seemed important to me are barely thoughts any longer. I notice life's suffering more - hungry children, the homeless and the destitute, a mother's harsh voice toward her young child or by an elderly person struggling with the door.

So many things I struggle to understand. Don't tell me that "God has a plan" for me. This, my friend, is between me and my God. Those platitudes seem far too easy to slip from the mouths of those who tuck their own child into a safe, warm bed at night. Can you begin to imagine your own child, flesh of your flesh, lying lifeless in a casket, when "goodbye" means you'll never see them on this Earth again? Grieving mothers- and fathers- and grandparents- and siblings won't wake up one day with everything "okay" and life back to normal. I have a new normal now.

Oh, perhaps as time passes, I will discover new meanings and insights about what my child's death means to me. Perhaps, one day, when I am very, very old, I will say that time has truly helped to heal my broken heart. But always remember that not a second of any minute of any hour of any day passes when I am not aware of the presence of the absence, no matter how many years lurk over my shoulder. Love never dies.

--By Dr Joanne Caciatore

Of all the challenges
you face in working through grief,
none is more demanding
than the endurance it requires

—Bob Deits

Guilty As Sin

A father's supposed to shield and protect his children from harm.
 Because of this I've tortured myself facing up to the fact
 That my child is dead and I'm still alive.
 Was it punishment for some long past sin?
 Why didn't I warn him?
 I should have known.
 I might have prevented it if I had been there.
 At least he wouldn't have died alone.
 At rare times when I laugh,
 I'm full of shame for having fun.
 I can easily see that logically I am not to blame,
 But I can't convince my psyche and me.
 In times of reflection I wonder why
 If God can forgive me, then why can't I?
 --Dr. Richard A. Drew

Newly Bereaved...

What Now?

Even those of us with steadfast faith find our belief system shaken after the death of a child. We seek, in various ways, to make sense of an often senseless tragedy. Whether our loss was a result of illness, accident, suicide, or murder, the questions are the same: "Why?" "Was it God's will?" "Is my family being punished for some (probably imaginary) sin?" "Could it be that there is no God (for the loving God of our religious training would not allow such a terrible thing to happen)?"

I agonized over these, and many other, unanswerable questions in my grief following the death of our daughter, Susan, last year. My faith in God was not sufficient - I could not accept her death as part of some "Master Plan". A long held belief in reincarnation, karma, and reunion in the afterlife became much less certain and reassuring, for it became much more important. And I was afraid to believe.

Some of us will, over a period of time, find either a new belief system or a return to the old that allows us to be at peace with our loss. Others will acknowledge there are no acceptable answers for now, and let the issues rest. It does not matter which path we follow, but it is vital that, no matter how long it takes, we find a way to cease investing all our emotional energy in a

quest that has no end.

We must, in my opinion, learn to concentrate upon ourselves - some of us for the first time in our lives. We, the survivors, have a duty to ourselves, our families, and to the memory of our children not to dwell in the world of what was or what might have been. We should re-enter, as soon as we are able, the world of reality and do the very best we can with the rest of our lives. The question we must really ask is not "Why?", but "What now?"

--Carol Sabush

TCF, Atlanta, GA

Welcome...



The Reason For TCF Meetings

One could ask, "Why go and listen to the woes of other people when it is easier to get wrapped up in our own?" It is not to compare tragedies, nor assess the right or wrong means of grieving, nor to pressure or complicate or confuse a bereaved parent with timetables of grief. This is not the reasoning behind TCF meetings.

When a child of a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. Finding a way isn't easy when the "rest of the world" rushes by, taking little notice that our life has changed.

The monthly meetings of The Compassionate Friends is a special time we can set aside to gain and maintain our balance. We need a lot of encouragement to endure and experience our emotions and to express ourselves while grieving. Coming to a meeting can help alleviate the feeling of being alone in sorrow. The environment of other bereaved parents offers a means of keeping in touch with reality, in which there can be a sharing and mutual understanding. There is sustained support knowing that others are willing to acknowledge that though a child's song might be over, the melody of memories will remain woven throughout the remainder of our lives.

--N. Hunt TCF Sioux Falls, SO

Editor's Note: We invite you to join us at a meeting to see for yourself just how beneficial they can be. Hearing what is helping other bereaved deal with their loss can help you avoid some of the pitfalls in your own grief. Being with other parents who truly

understand the depths of your pain helps you to realize you are not alone...that others are going through the same issues...and most importantly, you will find hope by listening to those further down the road in grief.

Book In Review...



Helping Grieving Children - By Theresa Huntley - In brief and readable format this book explains how children at various ages understand and react to the death of a loved one. This book will help you listen to children, answer their questions, and guide them in coping with their feelings. Readers will gain an understanding of positive ways to deal with the emotional and behavioral changes associated with children's grief. Paperback, 80 pages. In our chapter's library.



Helpful Hint...

If we discovered that we only had five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be occupied by people calling other people to stammer that they loved the.

Why wait until the last five minutes?
--Christopher Morley (1890 - 1957) from Northern New York Chapters

We thank the following families for their year-end donation to help our South Bay/L.A. chapter of The Compassionate Friends

Marily Arvizo, in memory of John Edward James
Patricia Fuentes in memory of Peter J. Fuenes
Mike & Rita Dykstra in memory of Scott Michael Dykstra
Z & Michael Dewart in memory of Allison Dewart

Too Painful to Remember... Too Precious to Forget

Some say you were a child of sorrow,
That you only brought me pain and grief.
But I say ... no, out of you was born joy also.
Because your life gave me pleasure -
The pleasure of loving you and feeling you live inside of me.
Knowing our love gave you life.

I know that I cannot be with you now, or you with me.
But that is only in the flesh.
A piece of me goes with you wherever you are.
The nearness and dearness we shared will remain intact
Through time and dimension.

And I will always cherish you in my heart.
Through pain and sorrow,
Through guilt and anger,
Through disappointment and hurt,
And I will never replace you in that place I saved for you inside.
Though others may come and take a place where you were.

Some will say you are too painful to remember.
But I say NO ... no ... too precious to forget.
--By Anne L. Torrance RN and Bereaved parent

Dear God, Please Let This Be...

... more than tearing a page from the calendar,
... a year of healing and health,
... a year to forgive past hurts, and to forgive myself for whatever I feel I did wrong,
... a year to figure out ways to resolve my anger so I can let go of it,
... a year to finally stop asking why and accept what is,
... a year to start taking better care of myself,
... a year to concentrate on and value what I have left as much as what I have lost,
... a year to risk reinvestment in life,
... a year to reach out to someone in my child's memory,
... a year to let those I value know how important they are to me,
... a year to thank You for all that You've given me, even the things that didn't seem like such a blessing at the time.
... a Constructive, if not "Happy" Year
--Kathy McCormick and Mary Cleckley

When we walk to the edge of all the light we have and take that step into the darkness of the unknown, we must believe that one of two things will happen--
There will be something solid for us to stand on, or we will be taught how to fly.
--Patrick Overton



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

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 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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Michael Kropfman
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12
Parents: Brenda & Greg
Kropfmann

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

Tyiri Ojose
Born: 9/10 Died: 7/10
Mother: Maureen Ojose

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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 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

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

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

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

Joel Paulson Draper
Born: 1/84 Died: 3/04
Mother: Tracy Solis

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

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

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: Dolores & Frank Szucs

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

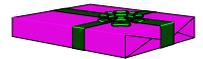
Gregory Earl Veal
Born: 2/90 Died: 7/00
Mother: Virginia Veal



Our Children Remembered



Birthday Tributes...



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

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

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

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

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

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

Marisa Ann Vuoso
Born: 7/83 Died: 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

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

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

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...

Celebrating Life is a Better Way to Cope with Death

Today marks a week since my youngest brother's birthday. However, instead of recalling memories of the family all here together eating cake and ice cream and celebrating the joyous occasion, my mind conjures up images that only seem to surface twice a year: on Jeffrey's birthday and on the anniversary of his death.

Seven years ago Jeffrey died by suicide. Though I was only 14 at the time, and so many years have passed since his death, when his birthday rolls around each year, so does the pain. Today, however, is my last day for mourning. About 3 years ago, I decided, instead of fighting back my emotions or feebly attempting to act as though everything is okay, on his birthday and on the anniversary of his death, I would allow myself a week to mourn and heal.

I have even developed a ritual. On these two occasions, I dress all in white, sit in a private place with the lights turned off, put on Bette Midler's "Wind Beneath My Wings" (the song she sang in the movie *Beaches* right after her best friend died), light a single white candle, and sort through old photographs of Jeffrey and the family. The color white has, for me, always represented light, rebirth, and newness. Thus, wearing all white is my way of saying, "Instead of mourning his death, I will celebrate his life." Lighting a single candle stems from our Catholic faith. It is a way of showing that the fire of his spirit is still alive. With the heat of the candle I can feel the warmth of his

presence. Listening to Midler's song helps me say all the things I didn't get a chance to say, especially when I carefully listen to the words and realize how much they apply to Jeffrey and me. The song seems to have been written for us.

When we were younger, I was the star of the family. The straight-A student who sang in the church choir and excelled in academic and athletic competitions. Jeffrey was the quiet one. He was reserved, an average student, and spent most of his time reading or practicing Ninjitsu. No one was surprised that I commanded most of the attention from my parents. This didn't seem to bother Jeffrey, however. He was easygoing, a good listener, and, best of all, he always supported me in everything I did. I thought he was the perfect brother. Losing him was extremely hard for me.

Everyone kept telling me to cry and let out the grief I was feeling. Someone even said that a year from now I wouldn't remember how painful this experience was. However, even now I remember how hard it was to return to school and my everyday life, and pretend everything was fine, acting as though I was dealing with his death and would be okay. I know people meant well by sharing their condolences and advising me on the best way to deal with my grief. In the end, I realized no one could truly understand what I was going through and their remedies for relief may have worked for them. However, I needed something more.

The first birthday after his death was especially hard, and I dealt with it in a very different way than I do now. I spent the entire month wearing black, closing myself off from everyone around me, and crying every time I had the inclination. I don't regret dealing with his death that way, but I do find solace knowing that seven years later, I can silently mourn without wearing black, without shutting myself off from the outside world, and without wearing a mask of happiness. I have healed at my own pace and in my own time.

I understand now that this is the only advice I could ever give someone experiencing a similar tragedy: make your time and deal with it in your own way. Only your way is the right way. Now I deal with Jeffrey's death the best

way I know how - by celebrating his life.

In that, I am at peace.

--Karma Lowe TCF of Los Angeles Newsletter, September, 2011

For Grandparents...



Nicholas

Nicholas died on December 6th, less than 24 hours before he was born. He was my second grandson. The doctors said it had something to do with amniotic fluid. He was a perfect little kid with a full head of beautiful black hair. He had perfect little features: ten perfectly formed little fingers, ten perfectly formed little toes, no deformities or anything - a perfect little kid.

The nurses urged me to spend a few private minutes with him, so they led me down the hall to a small, quiet room by the nursery. There they placed him gently in my arms. Feelings I had never experienced and still cannot adequately describe completely engulfed me. As I held him, we bonded in some mysterious, mystical, spiritual way that transcends human experience and understanding. In the space of those few minutes, we took all the hikes in the woods, all the fishing trips, all the walks in the park, read all the bedtime stories and had all the giggles and laughs of a lifetime. His body was limp in my arms, so I held him close to my tear-soaked chest. He was so beautiful, and I prayed to God that somehow this was just a nightmare. Somehow little Nicholas would suddenly start breathing, and I would jump up and shout the good news up and down the pastel halls of the maternity ward. I would go to the store and buy him a fishing pole, a baseball mitt and a toy truck. I would bounce him on my knee and smile as he laughed with glee. But it was not to be, and as the nurse took little Nicholas from my arms, I collapsed under the crush of the hurt and pain and helplessness. I felt cheated and I slumped to the floor, sobbing uncontrollably.

It's been almost 5 years now, and I'm beginning to heal. Looking back, I've learned a lot from Nicholas. I've learned that grief can be debilitating; grief can paralyze; grief can depress; grief can crush your heart and consume your mind. I've learned that I'm more

vulnerable than I thought. I've learned to be a better listener and to empathize more with people in despair. I've learned to cry more and laugh more. I've learned to seek professional help when I need it. I've learned to feel deeper, to live with more zest, and to savor each moment of my existence.

Grief has many forms and many sources. Some, we work through very quickly. Others, like losing Nicholas, are heavy burdens and require a lot of hard work. I've come to believe that grief, of any kind, never goes away; it transforms. Like bread dough, grief needs time to grow, needs kneading, needs punching, needs rest, and then, more kneading, more punching, more rest. It needs heating up and cooling down to transform, and if we are patient and keep working on it; if we don't try to hurry things; if we don't ignore it or stuff it; if we keep struggling with it, a transformation will take place. The grief, which was once so crippling, will now sustain us, make us stronger, and enable us to experience the fullness and richness of each new day. It will become bread for our journey.

Nicholas gave me a gift. I'm stronger now, somehow, and life has more meaning. I still grieve losing him. I still ask why. I still have bouts of sadness. I feel cheated, but I'm moving forward. I'm not crippled anymore. The experience of the past is enabling me to enjoy more todays, and I'm looking forward to more tomorrows. I'm beginning to be nourished by the bread. Thanks Nicholas.
--Gilman Smith, TCF Verdugo Hills, CA

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. 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: Jan 1st for February 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. 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. Also Spanish. Call Claire Towle or Patty Ellis (310) 374-6323

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

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

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

Other Grief Support Websites...

agast.org (for grandparents)	groww.com
beyondindogp.com	griefwatch.dom
angelmoms.com	babysteps.com
webhealing.com	healingafterloss.org
survivorsofsuicide.com	opentohope.com
taps.org (military death)	alivealone.org
bereavedparentsusa.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	save.org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	

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

STEERING COMMITTEE OFFICERS:

CHAPTER LEADER: Cheryl Stephens

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

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 our beautiful daughter, Allison Dewart, Oct. 1987 - Jan. 2006.
Love and Hugs- Mom & Dad

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

In loving memory of Jonathan Paul "Jamie" Schubert, July 1965 - Dec. 2006. In memory our of beloved son - called "a warrior in the fight for justice for the most needy" - whose memory we'll cherish as long as we live.
With love, His Mother & Father, Lynn & Roy Schubert

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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Yesterday is experience ...
Tomorrow is hope ...
Today is getting from one
To the other as best we can
--Author Unknown



January 2013

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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