



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Families After a Child Dies



South Bay/L.A. Chapter



A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND FAMILIES

MAY 2012 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be May 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.

MAY 2nd...

This month's topic will start with "Finding Hope for the future While Grieving."

Upcoming Events: July 20-22: TCF 35th National Conference... Are you coming? **Limited financial support** is available for our chapter members. **Can you volunteer to help?** 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.

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

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May 2nd meeting ... Starts with “**Finding Hope for the Future While Grieving.**” Many of us are still facing the loneliness and emptiness that we must bear when we finally come to the realization our child will never be physically here with us again in this lifetime. Some have passed this stage and are now learning how to reorganize their life and find hope for the future. **This future includes the upcoming Mother’s Day and Father’s Day.** This month we will be sharing ways we have found hope while looking to the future without our child here with us.

In the near future, Mother’s/Father’s Day will be upon us. For many of the parents among us, this may be a difficult day. The constant barrage of advertisements reminds us that our children aren’t here with us. The last Mother’s Day/Father’s Day card we received takes on a new meaning when it will have to last a lifetime. This meeting we will be sharing ways to take some of the sting out of Mother’s Day and Father’s Day with a child missing.



From Death to Hope

Going from unbelievable pain over our loss to finding hope for the future takes work and time. Each baby step we force ourselves to face ultimately helps us to regain our lives. As we learn that grief two-step we start to see our bad days are lessening but will return and we start to realize this pain may start to diminish, which gives us sliver of hope. Although we would rather have our child here instead of missing them so terribly, we need to recognize we do grow from our loss. Our new understanding of what is truly important in life changes. With that change we become different people.

I refuse to believe all this pain and suffering was for nothing... I believe that something positive has to come out of something so overwhelmingly negative. Most of us seem to evolve from this horrendous pain a better person. Living through this tragedy makes many of us more patient, understanding, loving, and compassionate.

Time goes on. We have no control over that. We would like time to stop so things can remain the same as when our children were here, but it won’t. Life moves ahead without them here. There is no one magical thing that suddenly gives us hope. Life eventually catches us up in the everyday things we do to exist. It moves ahead and drags us along, and we learn how to handle the changes.

In the beginning of grief we couldn’t care less about what is happening around us. Making simple everyday decisions leaves us exhausted. Planning anything seems useless. We can’t control anything, so why make plans that can be ripped from us. Why

let glimmers of hope lead us down into another pit of pain? If we don’t want, we won’t be disappointed. Slowly, we begin to heal from the onslaught of pain that grief causes. Ever so slowly, we begin to realize that deadlines can be met, events can be planned, the future might even hold some happiness.

We also realize we must take chances again. Nothing is foolproof, but everything is not a disaster waiting to happen. There are no guarantees in life, but we owe it to ourselves and to our child’s memory to make something out of the life we’ve been given. With time the depression lifts and life awaits us. Life is still scary, but it is worth living again, instead of just existing. The realization that I can do some things my child would have done, if given the chance, gives me the encouragement to try. I can do things in his memory. I can do things we both can be proud of.

Grief work is the hardest thing you may ever have to do. You can’t hide from grief or just wait for time to heal you, with the hopes the pain will go away. You must deal with it. First wallow in your grief, accept it, work through it, and give yourself time. It will get better as you find ways to deal with it.

Each year got easier. It’s taken four years but I realize I have grown from this experience. All this pain has taught me something ... I’m a survivor, and I can take a chance on life again. It still seems scary, but I deserve some happiness. I’ve paid my dues. Remember, wherever you are in your grief, it takes time and hard work. I hope you will also reach a point where you can be happy again. You deserve to be happy and to find hope for your future. Your child would want no less.

--Lynn Vines

South Bay/L.A.,CA

Finding Hope

Some find hope in butterflies, and some in children’s smiles.

Some find hope in photographs, and some in walking miles.

Some find hope in quietness and solitary reflection.

Some find hope in helping others and sharing friendly affection.

Some find hope in holding tight to all the old traditions.

Some find hope in the creation of a special new variation.

Some find hope in family gathered, and some in cherished friends.

Some find hope in seeking God and feeling the peace worship brings.

Beyond the sad and beyond the past,

Beyond the ache that lasts and lasts,

There is a path that winds its way into your future and a hopeful day. --Karen Pope



An Open Letter to Bereaved Parents

My heart breaks all over again when I hear of another child who died too soon. Unfortunately, I understand and truly know the horror and suffering in your heart. We also lost our beloved child, Michael, who was 21 years old and died in a motorcycle accident just six and a half years ago. I feel compelled to write a letter in hopes that in sharing my journey it may provide you with some sense of hope for the future at a time when only darkness seems to prevail. Most newly bereaved parents wonder if the pain will ever subside and question if they will ever get better. I recall my feelings of desperation, wanting someone to tell me that eventually, I would make it and be OK. I am here to tell you that you will get better, but it is an incremental process that is different for everyone. I want you to know that there is light that will slowly replace the darkness. A renewed sense of living fully with an increased compassion for others will become a part of your existence as you heal, as it has for me.

The loss of a child is like no other. Initially, there are no words to describe the unfathomable, incomprehensible, and immeasurable loss of a child. You move through your days experiencing a myriad of emotions from shock, denial, anger, and deep despair, which often brings you to your knees. As I have learned in my own healing journey, time heals and the grief does soften. Of course we never "get over" or "resolve" the loss of a child. I remember so vividly in the early months how every breath and every heartbeat hurt. Every second of my waking hours were thoughts of my son, and I constantly replayed the "video" of that horrible day in my mind. I often wondered how anyone could possibly survive the kind of unbearable and intolerable pain that flowed through to the core of my very existence. I longed for peace in my heart and prayed each day that the torment would eventually dissolve. I held on to the smallest sliver of hope that someday I would want to live and embrace life once again.

I feel that time has come, but not without a great deal of enormous difficulty and effort as I traveled my healing journey. A sense of joy and renewed purpose in life has replaced the deep despair that lingered in my heart and every cell of my being where it resided for such a long time.

Even though time does heal, you will never be the same again, and you will always look at life differently. The reality of what has just happened to you will not totally become a part of your existence for a long time. It's an amazing gift that our psyches don't experience

the full impact of trauma when it initially occurs. For me it felt like the "news" traveled through different parts of my body and each individual cell as time moved forward. It took quite some time for every cell in my body to truly "know" the full impact of my loss.

The jolts of reality initially hit you like a huge crashing wave in an expansive deep ocean, and you wonder if you can ever find your way to the surface again. As time goes by those crashing waves will become gentler, and you won't feel like you are drowning in a sea of sorrow. Eventually you will find yourself standing on the shore reflecting back on the tumultuous storm that you have survived.

You will question over and over again and ask "why ... what if .. if only ... is he/she OK?" until you don't need to anymore. I came to the realization that even if I were handed the reason (if there is a reason) that my precious son left this Earth, he still wasn't physically with us and it wouldn't bring him back or ease my sorrow. For whatever the reason our beloved children left this Earth too early in our way of thinking, and we will never know why until it's our time to make our transition and join with them again. You will most likely go through a process of questioning your faith. I trust you will come to some level of acceptance over time.

Some people will come into your life and others will simply need (or choose) to distance themselves because it's too hard and painful for them. Family, friends, and co-workers will most likely be there providing much needed support, love, and compassion for awhile as you begin this healing journey. Over time, that may become quite difficult for some. It takes a very special person to travel along this path with a bereaved parent. I found that a very few special people in our lives were able to be present with the magnitude and intensity of our emotions and support us for the long haul. Our greatest strength came from other bereaved parents because no matter how well intended and heartfelt the people in our lives were, they simply could not understand the magnitude of our grief. Lucky for them. Be patient with those who try to support you and who will undeniably make comments or say platitudes that you won't find very helpful. I learned to disregard any phrase that included the words, "at least...." Others will be afraid to mention your child's name or ask you how you are for fear that they will "make you sad." They just simply don't know what to do or say and are doing the best they know how. Who could blame them for that?

You learn to deal with all kinds of comments and people and also learn to forgive their frailties. We are the ones that have to learn to live in a world that sometimes doesn't seem very compassionate or patient with our grief. The beauty is that your life will be blessed with new friends that seem like angels who

will appear to hold your hand and help you through the rough times. The support and love I received from my more seasoned, bereaved parent friends and TCF were a Godsend and a lifeline that I deeply cherish. They are friends for life -- a special kinship that we share. I encourage you to surround yourselves with a few other bereaved parents who have traversed this path before you when you are ready. They are the ones who can truly light the way when you begin to lose your way.

Although it's difficult to accept, there are many gifts and blessings that come out of the enormity of your loss. Appreciate them but know that anyone of us would gladly trade any of those gifts and blessings in a heartbeat to spend just one more minute with our child.

Perhaps you have already received signs from your child. I haven't talked to a bereaved parent who hasn't. People who are experiencing trauma are usually very open to the universe and its messages to help us along the way. Those gifts are wonderful blessings, and we hold them so dear to our hearts. Don't despair if you haven't received messages from your child - be patient.

Be kind to yourselves, gentle and loving, and nurture your hearts. Don't be afraid to ask for help from others. Give yourself whatever you need to deal with each day and don't expect too much from yourselves. Sometimes just remembering to breathe is an admirable goal for one day. Don't judge your grief. Many times I thought I should be "handling my grief better" because I was a psychologist and my grief did not seem to fit the grief model in my textbooks. It didn't take me long to let go of my unrealistic expectations and allow my grief to unfold and manifest in whatever way it was meant to.

There are many layers of grief that we don't even realize until we find ourselves processing a different aspect of the loss that we hadn't considered before. I learned that people who have lost a child deal with their grief in their own time line and their own way. There is no right way, other than what feels right for you. There are things you can do to help care for yourself such as massage, exercise, therapy, creativity, and Journaling, to mention a few. If you have a partner, be patient with each other. There may be times when you hold each other so close as if each of you were holding on to a lifesaver in the middle of the ocean and at other times when you become quite distant. Know that is normal. Remember that stepparents grieve, too. If you have other children they, of course, will go through their own grief process in their own time... often years later. Life will take on a "new normal" after the years pass.

I wish I had been dealt a different hand, but I

wasn't and neither were you. The most I can do is to offer myself and any words which can give you some hope and comfort in a time of such tremendous suffering. I hold you close to my heart and pray for your healing as you begin this most difficult journey. It is my hope that you shall, too, someday feel a sense of peace in your heart I also pray for your now beloved Angel Child as he/she begins a new journey in another realm of existence.

--Pamela S. Leonhardt, PsyD *Blessings*, 7/14/99

Mothers Day and Fathers Day



With Mothers Day and Fathers Day approaching, reflection on our child's (children's) life is almost inevitable. Some of us, especially those newly bereaved, may feel that with the loss of our child came the loss of our status as "parent." We may feel we must forfeit this title, and that is painful.

This feeling then amplifies our sense of loss, and the tight downward spiral of emotional pain begins again. Add to this painful mix the fear-filled anticipation of these upcoming holidays and the result is often a wish we could sleep through the whole thing. Or run away. Many of us would just as soon never participate in those holidays again. Too painful.

As tempting as avoiding them may be, it's nearly impossible to do, especially if there are surviving siblings at home. They may feel the need to observe these days to create a fantasy that everything is "okay" so that we will be "okay" again. Or they may need to assure themselves that you're still their parents.

Whatever the reason, we may feel even more stressed and hurt. With such things as this going on while we are struggling with our grief, we are overwhelmed. We cannot imagine a time in the future when we'll be able to face these holidays.

And there will probably be well-meaning friends and family advising us on how best to face these days. They love us and mean to help us, but we're just not able to handle any of it. Will it ever get better? Will there come a time when Mothers Day and Fathers Day don't cause us such terrible pain? Yes, No, and Maybe. Take your pick. In any order. They all are answers to these questions. And they all are not answers to these questions.

The fact is, we all grieve differently. Husbands and wives grieve differently. Siblings grieve differently. No one way is "right", no one way works better for everyone. The consensus among experts seem to be that the "right" answer is the one with which you feel the most comfort. And that it may change from time-to-time. And that's okay. You don't "progress" through the stages of grief, as if on a ladder, and stay on the

"top" rung for good. Grief stages are more like a set of trampolines and we bounce from one to another as we move from one stage to another. Some bounce us higher and others drop us lower, but in the end, we have to try them all, maybe several times, before we begin to heal.

--Compiled from several sources. TCF Orange County CA newsletter

Making Mother's and Father's Day Special

Here are a few hints to help you through these days after the loss of a child.

- 1) Pamper yourself-this is a special day in your life. You are a parent forever and your child is your child forever.
- 2) Do what you need to do-what helps you. Grieve your way.
- 3) Be with those who surround you with love, not demands or advice.
- 4) Plan ahead-do things that make you feel good or give you a moment's peace.
- 5) Start new rituals to make new memories.
- 6) Share your thoughts with family members; decide together what the day should include. (If you are alone, find a good friend.)
- 7) Include deceased children in the day-through prayer, lighting a candle, telling stories about them, looking through pictures, planting flowers or a garden, doing a good deed, writing about them, making their favorite recipe.
- 8) Join with another bereaved family to honor this day and have mutual support.
- 9) Start a garden or add to a special garden in memory of your child.
- 10) Use this day to plant spring flowers so you can always see your child in each bloom and each bouquet that you cut.
- 11) Visit the cemetery if that helps your heart on this day.
- 12) Plant a flower or shrub that will come to bloom this time of year.
- 13) Do something special for someone else or something special in your child's name (helping Cancer Care, MADD, Scouting, a nursing home, etc.)
- 14) Listen to music that makes your heart feel good.
- 15) Cook some favorite recipes that your child enjoyed or cooked for you.
- 16) Buy a present for yourself from your child and enjoy the comfort it brings you.
- 17) Write a poem or article in memory of your child, sharing memories or whatever has helped you.
- 18) Attend a family gathering of relatives - their love

and support can give you a lift on this day.

19) Make a booklet of favorite poems that help your heart, and give copies to dear relatives and friends in memory of your child.

20) Take part in a special church ceremony honoring Mother's Day and Father's Day.

22) Set aside some special time to grieve, unloading all the frustration and sadness that can envelop you on such a day giving you time to meditate alone.

23) Write a letter to your child, telling what's in your heart (perhaps some unfinished business or some new blessing that has enriched your life).

24) Allow the tears to flow- crying is healing and allows a release for your feelings.

25) Think of a way to "share your child with the world" - making sure his or her memory lives on through scholarships, writing, good deeds.

26) Give and get plenty of hugs.

--Elaine Stillwell Rockville Center, NY

Love is unconditional
Love knows no boundaries
Especially the love between a parent
And a child

It cannot be measured
It cannot be understood
It can only be cherished ...

--Joanne Cacciatore from her book, *Dear Cheyenne*



The Significance of Mother's Day

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same and the death of my only child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have that intense feeling of love for my child, a love greater than any I had known before. So as Mother's Day approaches, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I, too, want to be remembered as a mother.

--Ginny Smith TCF, Charlottesville, VA

This Mother's Day tribute from the internet got me to thinking...When facing the future, we need to regain our sense of humor. Let's start with some of the silly sayings that are a part of everyday life.--Lynn Vines

In Appreciation of Mother's Wisdom

1. My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE. "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished washing the floor."



2. My mother taught me RELIGION. "You'd better pray that will come out of the carpet."

3. My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL. "If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

4. My mother taught me LOGIC. "Because I said so, that's why."



5. My mother taught me MORE LOGIC. "If you fall out of the swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."

6. My mother taught me FORESIGHT. "Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

7. My mother taught me IRONY. "Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."

8. My mother taught me about the science of osmosis. "Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

9. My mother taught me about CONTORTIONS. "Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"



10. My mother taught me about STAMINA. You will sit there until all those vegetables are gone."

11. My mother taught me about WEATHER. "This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."

12. My mother taught me about HYPOCRISY. "If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"

13. My mother taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE. "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

14. My mother taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION. "Stop acting like your father!"

15. My mother taught me about ENVY." "There are millions of less fortunate children in this world don't have wonderful parents like you do."

16. My mother taught me about ANTICIPATION. "Just wait till your father gets home."



17. My mother taught me about RECEIVING. "You're going to get it when we get home!"

18. My mother taught me MEDICAL SCIENCE. "If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they're going to freeze that way."



19. My mother taught me ESP. "Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you're cold."

20. My mother taught me HUMOR. "When that lawnmower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."

21. My mother taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT. "If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

22. My mother taught me GENETICS. "You're just like your father."

23. My mother taught me about my ROOTS. "Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"



24. My mother taught me WISDOM. "When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

25. My mother taught me JUSTICE." One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

How many of these did your mother teach you?

Memorial Day

I saw you today, in the downy soft face of a newborn babe, nestled lovingly in the protective arms of his mom. I felt the joy that only a mother could feel, radiating from her face as she proudly gazed at him. It took me back to another day when you first came into my life.

I saw you today in a precocious four-year-old at the supermarket. His little hands grabbed for colorful boxes of cereal and other goodies. His bewildered young mom kept one hand on him and one on the cart while explaining to him why he couldn't

have everything he saw and what would happen to him if he didn't behave.

I heard your voice today through the backyard fence in the voices of children as they negotiated at play. Who was going to be the first to go down the slide and who was going to tell Timmy next door that he couldn't play? My mind raced back to another day when you came running in from play, saying someone wasn't being fair.

I wiped the tears from your dark little face and brushed your hair back with my hand. Somehow a hug and a kiss would even the score. Out you'd go to get into it again.

I saw you today, in a young boy 12 or 13 years old racing his bike down the street. I remember the blue one we bought for you and how proud you were of it. How I worried as you flew like the wind down the street, hoping you wouldn't get hit by some careless driver. How we searched the town after it was stolen from the parking lot at school; the disappointment you felt when we couldn't find it.

I saw you today on the football field as the boys were out for practice. Driving by, I remembered your games, the ones I missed because I had to work. How proud I was when I did see you play.

I saw you today in a young army private just home on leave; those civilian clothes were no cover for that short cropped hair. Your hair, soft as a kitten it was. I was the only one you'd trust to cut it. "Thanks, Mom," you'd say, "that's just how I wanted it." That hair, cut within an inch of your scalp, was not at all your style. You looked so strange this Christmas when you came home on leave. But you were my son, and you looked very handsome to me, and I was so very proud of you.

I saw you today in the handsome strong face of an eighteen-year-old. The smile on his face belied the turmoil within. Only God knows why he, like you, decided that life wasn't worth living anymore. He ended his life with a single shot just as you ended yours. I sit and stare at his picture in the obituary column of the morning paper. Hot tears sting my face as I think of his mom, how much she must have loved him. I share in her grief, remembering the numbness of the first few days and the unbearable pain. I say a silent prayer for her and the young man, knowing for her what surely lies ahead. As she lays her son to rest, her memorial day has just begun. For as each passing moment, hour, and day evolve into weeks, months, years, she will see her son and hear his voice in someone else's child, and she will remember.

--Mary A. Bell TCF, Ankeny, IA

Life Is for the Living

I went to offer condolence, a job I abhor, but done

it must be. The grief-stricken mother paced the floor and tearfully poured her heart out to me. She said "What does one do with the baby bed when the baby dies? What does one do with a heart that moans and aches and cries? What does one do with all the tiny things made by loving hands? What does one do with shattered dreams ... and hopes ... and plans?"

I tried to console her, but she looked at me with reproachful eyes and said, "But what could you know of a mother's grief when her baby dies?" "The sorrow that lay dormant all these many years ripped thru my aching heart and filled my eyes with tears." I answered her softly

"Twice, I have knelt beside a tiny grave with none left to call me Mother. Twice, I have loved a tiny soul, each one more than the other. I know the ache of empty arms in a house that's suddenly still. I know the pain of a broken heart that moans and cries at will. Our baby bed was placed in the attic, with a tear drop on the dusty floor. An old trunk stored the tiny things they never ever would wear. The shattered dreams were placed in the back of my mind for a later giving. And my heart mended itself, my dear, because life is for the living."

--Greater Ozarks Chapter, Springfield, IL

Newly Bereaved...

In Time



When we grieve and hurt, we seem to be more aware of everyone's shortcomings, mistakes and limitations. When we grieve and hurt, we seem to be less capable of forgiveness and understanding. When we grieve and hurt, we must try to realize that feelings of anger and frustration are natural, and that they are temporary. In time, we will rediscover our ability to understand and forgive many people, not only others in the world around us, but also ourselves.

The important words here are "IN TIME."
--Sascha Wagner, from *The Sorrow and the Light*

For Friends And Family...

Share Your Memories with Me

Please share your memories with me. Don't hesitate to tell me your stories about my son. I may shed a tear or two, but don't let that discourage you. Share with me the camping trip you took together, the times he laughed with you, and the times he helped a friend. Share with me all the times, good and bad; your memories will then be mine, too.

I only have memories, and I can't add to them

without your help. Memories are all that I have left.
--Jane Kelley TCF, Richmond, VA

Welcome ...



I'm Here

I cannot ease your aching heart,
Not take your pain away,
But let ME stay and take your hand
And walk with you today!
I will listen when you need to talk;
I will wipe away your tears
I will share your worries when they come;
I will help you face your fears.
I am here and I will stand by you,
Each hill you have to climb,
So take my hand, let's face the world;
Live one day at a time!
You're not alone, for I'm still here.
I will go that extra mile
And when things are a little easier,
I'll help you learn to smile!
--By Jeanne Losey

Editor's Note: Every bereaved parent brings their own pain and story to the meetings. By being there for each other and listening and offering suggestions, it eases everyone's pain. What you have found helpful in your grief may be just the information another bereaved parent who is struggling with their own pain needs to hear. We invite you to attend the meetings and see for yourself how helpful they can be.

Helpful Hint ...



The lasting gift that any loved one gives us is their presence in our hearts ... It is up to us to dedicate ourselves to integrating that loving spirit into our ongoing lives."

--Carol Staudacher, From the book *A Time to Grieve*

Book Review ...



Parting Is Not Good-bye by Kelly Osmont and Marilyn McFarlane Nobility Press, Portland, Oregon. This is a book about a single mother who loses her only child. She tells her experiences in a very moving and personal way. She shares her frustration, anger, hopelessness, and agony. She also shares her strengths and recovery. Her son was 19 years old when he died, and she describes the relationship of mother and son before this tragedy happened, and takes you through the hope of her son's recovery, and his death. She explains how her life has changed and

how she found the strength to survive.

Happy Mother's Day

Happy Mother's Day to those of you who have only dreamed of a child you could never conceive.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who never got to feel your child flutter in your womb for he was gone too soon.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who went through labor to hold a still, silent yet perfect angel baby in your arms.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who looked day by day at your healthy baby only to find her silent, cold and gone one day.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who fought hard and whose child fought harder for a life too short.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who knew the day was coming when you would no longer hold your child yet you gave him a full life.
Happy Mother's Day to those whose child was 4 or 5 and brought you crushed wildflowers last year but who have gone on since then.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who could no longer pick up your baby because she was too big, but in the end you rocked back and forth invaded by grief.
Happy Mother's Day to those of you who raised your children well but had to bury them all too young, all too soon.
Happy Mother's Day to all who are mothers whether they cherish their children all on earth or they spend Mother's Day enthralled by their grief for a brief moment in time. Were we more mothers then than now? NO! Be clear and let no one take away our right of motherhood!!

-- Jean Stewart, Mother to Rebecca "Becca" Stewart
10/16/1998—1/1/1999 And Christopher Stewart
1/18/2000—1/18/2000

*You gain strength,
courage, and confidence
by every experience
in which you really stop
to look fear in the face.*

*You are able to say to yourself,
"I have lived through the horror,
I can take the next thing that comes along."
You must do the very thing
you think you cannot do.
--Eleanor Roosevelt*



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 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

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



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 Fraze
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

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



Our Children Remembered



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
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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 Ramarez 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 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: 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

Lexi Noelle Valladares
Born: 4/04 Died: 1/10
Parents: Fausto & Erica Valladares

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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.)

A Birthday Tribute to:

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...**The Surviving Child**

How hard it must be to physically lose your brother or sister and emotionally lose one or both of your parents. Yet, the surviving child deals with this most of the time. We, as parents, speak of how a part of us died and will never be the same. Who is more aware of this than our children, no matter what age--even as an infant we can sense a difference in someone's touch or voice? Our children have spent most of their lives trying to "figure out" and "deal with" us. Now all of a sudden, they find they have lost all knowledge as to how we will show our emotions, interact with others, and, most important, relate to them. We cannot even be sure of our stability when grief strikes us; yet, the surviving child must learn to adapt quickly.

Here are a few suggestions to help the surviving sibling cope with a world that has been changed sometimes in a matter of a few seconds.

- a. Acknowledge the need for honesty-- do not try to hide your grief from them.
- b. Avoid the non-supportive who robs both adults and children of their right to grieve.
- c. Provide a time when age appropriate release of grief can be experienced. Such as drawing, writing, playing with others, or simply acting out of their emotions.
- d. Provide good role models for them-- other bereaved siblings. One of the

hardest things I have done in my life was to bury a child, but the next hardest thing has been to parent surviving siblings. I Wish you patience and understanding while you are faced with this enormous job.

Sincerely, Andrea Simoni, Chapter Leader,
--TCF, Cumberland Co., NJ

Sometimes Late at Night

Sometimes- late at night-
When the wind is perfectly still,
When the moon shines softly down
On what's supposed to be God's will,
When the moon, like me, is fragile and pale
And inside me grows a small fear,
I think of you and I ponder
The reason you're no longer here.
--Carole Blatchford TCF, Montgomery, AL

For Grandparents...



"Please Give Mommy A Flower Every Year, Grammy"

There is nothing more tragic than the death of a child. Yet sometimes it's the child who helps ease the grief of the family left behind. As Karolyn very carefully selected the flowers she wanted to give her daughter for Mother's Day, she imagined Annie's face when she received them. Karolyn knew that the yellow chrysanthemums would make Annie cry, but she also knew she'd smile through those tears. The flowers would bring back very happy memories of her daughter, Ashley.

Tears filled Karolyn's eyes as she thought of her granddaughter. Ashley was only four when she died in 1988 from a brain tumor. Ashley was a sweet child who always laughed, she recalls. Karolyn and her granddaughter had a special bond. They both loved flowers, and each spring Ashley helped her grandma plant the seeds that would bloom in mid-summer.

When the flowers blossomed, Grandma let Ashley pick big bouquets to bring home. As Ashley picked the posies, she'd sing, "You Are My Sunshine," and with her long, blond hair, she looked to Karolyn just like a ray of sunshine.

Annie had thought Ashley had the flu, but when she didn't get better, Annie took her to the hospital.

Tests revealed the brain tumor. "Oh, Mom," Annie sobbed as she told Karolyn the news. "What am I going to do?" The sight of her daughter's tear-streaked face tore Karolyn's heart, but she held back her own tears. "I wanted to be strong for my girls," she says.

Surgeons operated on Ashley, but they were unable to remove all of the deadly tumor. Chemotherapy was the little girl's last hope. For the next four months, Ashley fought to live. She was in and out of the hospital, and Karolyn spent every moment she could with her, so Annie, who was a single mom, could spend time with her two other children, nine-year old Dixie and six-year old Casey.

As the weeks passed, Ashley grew weaker instead of stronger. But she never complained. The only time she cried was when the chemotherapy made her hair fall out. "I miss my hair," she sobbed. Karolyn cried with her.

In May the doctors told Annie and Karolyn that Ashley wasn't responding to the treatments. A few days before Mother's Day, they told Ashley she could go home. Karolyn spent the last night in the hospital with Ashley. As she stroked her granddaughter's forehead, tears spilled down her cheeks. Ashley patted her hand. "Love you, Grammy," she murmured. "I love you, too, angel," Karolyn replied.

A little while later, Ashley spoke again. "Mommy really needs a flower," she whispered. "Mother's Day is in a few days," Karolyn said. "Would you like me to give her some flowers?" Ashley nodded. "Every year," she said. "How about yellow ones like your curls use to be?" Karolyn asked. Ashley's fingers climbed to her fuzzy bald head. She smiled weakly. Sobbing, Karolyn gathered her granddaughter in her arms and promised she'd never forget.

In the morning, Ashley went home. She died in her mother's arms later that day. On Mother's Day, Karolyn left a pot of yellow mums on Annie's doorstep with a note that read, "With all my love, Mom." As each year passed, she kept her promise to Ashley, but she waited four years to tell Annie why she'd been giving her flowers. "By then, Annie could smile when she talked about Ashley," Karolyn explained. So

two years ago, on Mother's Day, Carolyn told Annie about her daughter's request. Annie sobbed, "You could never give me a more precious gift."

Annie planted the flowers in a corner of her yard that she now calls Ashley's Garden. "When the golden flowers bloom, we remember Ashley and the sunshine she brought into our lives," Carolyn says.
--Taryn Phillips-Quinn, Wayne County Chapter Newsletter, Marion, New York

From Our Members ...



Blame It on My Grief

We are walking around like we are in a daze
Wondering if this is just another phase
It's hard to stay focused and to keep on track
We feel like we are just flat on our backs
These days seem long with no end in sight
I feel like I've been in a terrible fight
I have no drive, no ambition, and such
This feeling inside is just too much
It's no one's fault it just turned out this way
"Blame it on my grief" that's my thought of the day
From morning through night from dusk till dawn
I will try to find some good in this wrong
My thoughts and my dreams seem so strange
to me
But for now, I will just let it be
I just say, "Blame it on my grief and wait and see
For this to be over, maybe that's the key
--Richard Leach, grandfather of Frankie and
Vanessa Castania. TCF South Bay/L.A., CA

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 contact our editor.

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 right 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.

TCF 2012 National Conference... will be held July 20-22, 2012 in Costa Mesa, California. For more information call the National office at (877) 969-0010 or go online at www.CompassionateFriends.org. You can also make reservations for the conference hotel if you choose to stay there. We recommend that you reserve your room early, they are going fast.



South Bay/LA Chapter Members... Your registration packets from the National Office should have arrived by now. If not, go online to register, or call them toll free (877) 969-0010.

We have limited funds available to support our chapter's newly bereaved (5 years or less) parents that cannot afford the conference registration fees (Approximately \$ 90). Please mail your request for this scholarship: South Bay/L.A. Chapter of TCF, PO Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510.

We Need Your Help... The 2012 Conference Planning Committee needs volunteers for this summer's conference. Our chapter is in charge of the Volunteer desk, and the Hospitality and Reflection Rooms. If you are planning on attending please let us know if you can help by calling Kitty Edler at (310) 541-8221 or E-mail her at KittyEdler@aol.com. 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? A couple of hours of your time would be greatly appreciated.

We would love to include as many members of our chapter and other chapters across the country. 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 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. 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 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@tcfsla.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 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

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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.

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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: April 1 for May 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

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

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

PROOFREADER: 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 all our children who be especially missed this Mother's Day.
South Bay/LA Chapter

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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*A mother holds
her children's
hands for awhile
But, their hearts
Forever and ever.*

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MAY 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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