



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

MARCH 2018 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be March 7th, 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.--

The Compassionate Friends
Mission Statement...

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

The March 7th meeting will start with "How Do I Do This Thing Called Grief?"

Don't forget to send in your updated information for our data base. See page 15.

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

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

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The March 7th meeting will start with “**How Do I Do This Thing Called Grief?**” Our child has died. Even if we have experience with other types of death, the loss of a child is its own unique hell. Nothing can compare to the pain of losing a child. We still have to function, but how? Why does it hurt so much? What should I be doing? How do I do this thing called grief? There are no magical formulas for surviving grief. Grief is hard work, probably the hardest thing we have ever done.

Everyone grieves differently and we stumble though the pain looking for answers. We will each find through trial and error, what works for us. We may wonder if all bereaved parents feel this same anguish or are we losing it? The following articles from other bereaved parents offer suggestions for getting through the pain and learning to live without our loved ones here with us.



Grief 101

We all experience grief in our own ways. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to deal with grief. Sandy Goodman, provides us with some tips that might help the grieving process, and also remind us that it's okay to grieve in our way:

I want to write about Grief in its infancy. I want to share some concrete suggestions that may (or may not) help you "rebound or spring back" to a stronger you. I want to give you some basics that can increase your Resiliency. We'll call it Grief 101 and we'll have just a few rules for our classroom.

1. Don't do anything that feels wrong.
2. Take as long as you want.
3. Add new experiences in whatever order you wish.
4. Be patient with yourself.
5. Understand that I am only going to give you Chapter 1 of the text. The rest of the book is yours to write. Okay, are you ready? Feet flat on the floor, attention on the teacher? There goes the bell.

Lesson #1

Early in your journey of grief, you may feel as if a cloud has descended into your world. You will feel numb. Your mind will say it's been hurt but your heart will feel as if it has stopped. You may begin wondering if it really happened. You may have blank spots in your memory. Instead of fighting to remember and relive the details, let the numbness help you. Let it be. It will be gone soon

enough and reality will come crashing in. Allow the denial to protect you while you build up your strength.

Lesson #2

Realize that the pain you feel is as strong as the love you have for your loved one. The obsession with their absence is normal, and not something to try to get over or avoid. Your grief is a tool for honoring them. You cannot "not feel" it. You cannot get to the other side of the pain without walking right through the middle. You must feel it until it changes.

Lesson #3

Talk to your loved one. Ask them to help you grieve. Tell them what you are feeling. Close your eyes, picture them in a happy moment, and "think it" to them. Even if you do not believe they can hear you, the simple act of conversation should ease your loneliness.

Lesson #4

Write. Write to your loved one, write in a journal, write poems, or do automatic writing. Writing is free therapy. The key is to put it on paper. Make it permanent. Take it out of your brain and send it into the world.

Lesson #5

Meditate. Nothing helped me more than the hours I spent alone with my heart and eventually with Jason. Learning to shut out the physical world and connect with the world I could not see was huge. Use the simplest technique you find. Meditation is not, and should not be, difficult.

Lesson #6

Give yourself permission to change. Many who suffer a significant loss also go through a period of questioning their faith. They start believing, they stop believing, they change religions, they become interested for the first time, or they question everything. If you are feeling the pull to understand the why and the what and the where, honor your feelings. Searching helps open your heart to new experiences. Read new books, find like minded friends, and experiment with different practices. Above all, let fear go. Any belief system based on fear is a system with no room for love. Let it go.

Lesson #7

Acknowledge gratitude. Keep a notebook by your bed. Before going to sleep every night, write down 3 things that you are grateful for. Look it over often. Read it aloud when you are in the pit. What you send out into the Universe will come back to

you threefold. Would you not prefer that to be gratitude?

Lesson #8

Find a support group whose members have experienced similar losses. Civilians (those who have not experienced a loss) think that you should have been over your whining a couple of weeks after the funeral. Support from those who know how grief feels is imperative. If you can't find a group in your community, go online.

Lesson #9

Be willing to make THE DECISION. At some point in the future (for me it was three years after Jason's death), you will need to decide to either move forward or stay miserable until you die. If you decide to move forward, if you have done your work and honored your grief, you will know that you can take your loved one with you, rather than leaving him/her behind. I promise.

And there you have it, my lesson plan for Grief 101. To successfully pass the class, you should discard anything that creates fear and anger, and keep those that convey hope. You will add other tools as you discover them, and you should share with your classmates. Take your time, respect your grief, and make a commitment to heal. And most importantly, you need to accept that even this loss is a new beginning, like Spring, filled with the promise of growth and insight. I think I will add today's lessons to my gratitude list tonight. How about you?

--Sandy Goodman

Normal Feelings While Grieving



- A feeling of numbness—no feelings at all.
- A sense of abandonment and desolation.
- A sense of protest—"No, this did not happen." *
- Loss of appetite, an empty feeling in the stomach or "nervous eating" even when not hungry.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Guilt. Awareness of aspects in the relationship that were less than perfect. A feeling of "If only..."
- Anger—at God, at the people around us, at the person who died for leaving us, at those who took care of the one who died, at things which did or did not happen in the relationship.
- Restlessness and a desire to be busy, but difficulty in concentrating or finishing what is started.
- Aimless activity and forgetfulness.
- Wondering if you are "going crazy."

- Searching for or expecting the loved one to walk in the door or call on the phone: hearing his or her voice; seeing his or her face; frequent dreaming about the loved one.

- A need to tell and retell the details of the death.

- Crying at unexpected times and experiencing mood changes for minor reasons.

- A desire to remember and talk about life experiences with the loved one.

- An awareness that other people are uncomfortable around us and don't know what to say for fear of "upsetting us."

- A desire "not to be a bother" to other family members, while at the same time, needing to express the feelings of loss.

- Difficulty enjoying special days, like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and holidays. Feelings of loss seem acute at these times.

--Author Unknown from Cape Fear, North Carolina
TCF Chapter Newsletter April 2015

What I Need

TIME ~ Time alone; and time with others whom I can trust and who will listen when I need to talk. Months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings which go along with loss.

REST ~ I may need extra amounts of things I needed before. Relaxation, exercise, nourishment, diversion, hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, a cause to work for, to help others, any of these may give me a lift. Grief is an emotionally exhausting process. I need to replenish myself – to follow what feels healing and what connects me to the people and things I love.

SECURITY ~ I need to reduce, or find help for financial or other stresses in my life. I need to allow myself to be close to ones I can trust. It helps when I allow myself to get back into a routine, and to do things at my own pace.

HOPE ~ I find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them, and realizing that they have recovered and that time does help, gives me hope that sometime in the future my grief will be less raw and less painful.

CARING ~ I try to allow myself to accept the expressions of caring from others, even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering from the same loss often brings me a feeling of closeness with that person.

GOALS ~ It often feels that much of life is without meaning. At times like these, small goals are helpful. Something to look forward to, like playing tennis with a friend next week, a movie tomorrow night, a trip next month, helps me get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is a good rule of thumb.

At first, my enjoyment of these things just isn't the same. I know this is normal. As time passes, I will need to work on some longer range goals to give some structure and direction to my life. It is OK to get some guidance or counseling to help with this.

SMALL PLEASURES ~ I no longer underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food - all are small steps toward regaining my pleasure in life itself.

BACK-SLIDING ~ Sometimes after a period of feeling good, I find myself back in the old feelings of extreme sadness, despair or anger.

Intellectually, I know this is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. I'm told, this is because as humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death all at once. So, I give myself permission to let it in a little at a time.

DRUGS? ~ Drugs are not always helpful.

Sometimes, even medication intended to help me get through periods of shock may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. I cannot prevent or cure grief. The only way OUT is THROUGH.

-Alan Taplow Adapted by Alan Taplow from Judy Tatelbaum's book, *The Courage to Grieve*

Waiting for the Wake-Up Call



I'm waiting for the wake-up call that surely must come someday in this journey through grief. When will it get better?!! I'm waiting for the day when the memories are softer, the step a little lighter and when the sounds in my heart aren't always those of sadness. I'm waiting for the music to return, for the light to shine, for the magic to come back. I'm waiting for the pain to stop, the hurt to leave and for everything to go back to its original place. I want the picture to look the same as before, and I'm waiting until it does.

But, while I'm waiting, I'm learning a lot, I know I have to make lists now in order to capture my chores and things I have to do. I gave up trying to remember and now just carry a notepad with me

(with a pencil attached!) I have set the clocks 10 minutes fast so I have a better chance of being on time, and I have stocked the car with maps of every place I need to be.

I make menus and create shopping lists. I plan ahead, write down everything and then don't worry when I lose the list, get lost, or simply change my mind. I think most people thought I was always confused, so now I don't worry so much about not remembering. I'm taking advantage of being bereaved and I am learning to work with the lack of concentration, the forgetfulness, the confusion. If it isn't written down, it doesn't exist and I've been much happier ever since!

If the weather and the seasons can't get it together, why should I try to coordinate an outfit? I'll just wear what's comfortable for the moment and worry less about what others think. Maybe they are as confused as I am. Maybe they're struggling too. Maybe we should all just stop, look and listen...trying to remember to hold hands when crossing the street and practice hugging instead of hitting.

Maybe spring reflects nature's inability to make up its mind or maybe that hesitation to change is more of Mother Nature's mourning the passing of her winter season. Maybe it's hot one day and cold the next to keep us on our toes, to keep the blood flowing, the legs moving. Maybe shoveling snow one day and planting seeds the next is what we are supposed to be doing...maybe spring is the season of change and we should let go of the whys? and work on the hows? Maybe pushing the plow is better than trying to pull it. Maybe just relaxing into the craziness and letting the tides ebb and flow across the beach will work better than trying to direct the winds that change rides on. Perhaps letting the sun warm my winter weary bones is a more productive activity than rearranging the closet, and maybe the good memories will come back if I let them.

Maybe spring is the reason for getting up...to simply see what is possible today. Maybe today is the day and if I'm in bed, I'll miss the beginning, and I'll still be lost. Maybe I'm already in the middle of change and maybe I will always be confused, lost and slightly off balance, but maybe that's okay, and I'll just have to figure out how? instead of why? And when that happens, I know I won't be lost anymore! It really doesn't matter if it's Tuesday or Friday (unless one of those days is garbage day, and then it does matter!) Maybe I can let go of the

time frames and calendar pages that dictate my life and my emotions and let life simply flow.

Perhaps you and I have already answered the wake up call. Don't let a poor yesterday or an uncertain tomorrow use up today. I think this is it, and now is the time for being all I can be. Half of me is still in winter and dyeing eggs. All of me is still perhaps a bit off balance, but I am alive and that's a start! This wasn't the life I expected to live, but it is the one I've got. If I'm lost, I'd explore wherever it is I am. If I'm late, I'll just apologize and enjoy the time I have left. If I'm out of place, out of style or out of sync, I'll just keep dancing to the tune I hear and let the rest of the world figure out their own melody...

--Darcie Sims



March Wind

Perhaps our grief is like the March wind. When the wind blows, we have two choices: we can either stand tall and face the wind, or we can allow it to blow us over.

Stand tall against the wind, and imagine it is your child giving you the strength to endure. When you feel that gentle breeze or the wind upon your face, that's your child giving you a great big hug or just a soft embrace.

May the winds of March dry your tears and help you feel the presence of your child.

--TCF Quad City Area Chapter, Moline, IL

When a Child Dies by Homicide

The unexpected happens, and our world is turned upside down. Suddenly our child is taken from us, and nothing makes sense. It is a crumbling, humbling experience. We are helpless. Although it may not seem so now, nor for a long time, there is hope that things will get better.

We may have had the opportunity to say good-bye at the hospitalor not. Either way, it is not enough, and it is not fair that our child has been killed because of the choices made by another person. But right, wrong, fair, or unfair... it is what it is. So we begin to walk this path without our precious son or daughter to walk beside us. Our hearts have been shattered, but we continue to live on.

Our child is gone, and we are left to fight the legal battle in our child's memory. A sickness grows in the pit of our stomachs as more details

become evident. We may find ourselves not able to catch our breath, not able to eat, not able to sleep. When we finally do fall asleep, we often awake with sobs the deep kind that remind us of this tragic reality.

We ask a lot of questions - some out loud, some only to ourselves. Most questions start with why or how. We want to get to the bottom of the story... what really happened. We are tortured with our child's last moments. Information may not be forthcoming from the Sheriff's Office, Police Department, or State Attorney General's Office, and that alone is enough to drive us quite mad. We wonder if they have even investigated. The autopsy report may take several months in order to prove our child's death was actually a homicide. Sometimes we do not get the result we expect. If it is determined the death was not caused by another person, we are pretty much left on our own. Our child's death becomes a civil issue instead of a criminal one. Even when the autopsy yields the homicide verdict, we might feel we are still on our own in finding justice for our child.

We want to scream, and this might be a good time to let those screams out. We cling to sane parts of life: family, faith, work, for fear of slipping over the edge. We don't care if we shower, eat, or get our hair cut. Others who have not gone through this will not understand, even though they may offer all kinds of advice... like "snap out of it." Hearing news on the radio and television every day drives us crazy too. Violence is everywhere, and we wonder how this could possibly have happened to our child and to our family.

Even though our child's death is labeled a homicide, we may not hear from the State Attorney General's office nor the defendant's attorney. We call to ask how the investigation is going only to find we will not be privy to this information because believe it or not, the person responsible for our child's death has rights, and those rights are protected by law.

Before we know any details, the attorneys may ask us to sum up the worth of our child's life in a dollar amount. They may have already decided how they will proceed, but they may ask us to think about what kind of punishment or restitution the defendant should have. Of course in the end the judge will decide, unless there is a trial. These may seem like the coldest people on the face of the earth, once these conversations start taking place. They do not seem to understand our pain nor our

concerns.

We might have others help by writing letters to the State Attorney General's office. Otherwise our child might go unnoticed, like many other victims who have been assigned a number, then moved from the State Attorney's desk to the courtroom until the case is closed.

But for us, the case is never closed.

Anxiously, we mark our calendar and faithfully attend every hearing, thinking this is the day justice will come. It is a slow dance between the attorneys and the judge. We say what we'd like... they may accept or reject it. We may get phone calls from the newspaper or the defendant's attorney.

These can be traps, and we must be cautious. We may want to hire our own attorney just to know we have done everything legally possible.

Finally, the day comes when justice will be served, and we have a chance to give an impact statement to the court. By now, several months or years may have passed since our child's death, and as much as we want to do this, we may not be able to. Justice may not seem like justice at all, and nothing will return life to our child. Whatever is decided that day, we will have to live with for the rest of our lives.

We may deal with nightmares, but we can hope for a good dream the next time. We may not be able to forgive God, the defendant, or the judicial system. We may consider counseling, a small group, or a bereavement support group. We may listen to music and write in journals. As long as we are living, we have a purpose. We may think of that horrible day a thousand times, but one day, we realize we have a thousand good memories stored for recall. We have to carry on without our child with a different plan to persevere.

Our child may have left children. We are their historians. We can make memories with them and share stories of the Mom or Dad they no longer have. Perhaps, there are no grandchildren. We can help alleviate our pain by volunteering at an orphanage when we are ready. Because of the love we have for our child, random acts of kindness keep their memory alive. We can reach out to others in need and make a difference in the lives of the living. We must nourish our spirits, our bodies, our minds, and be good to ourselves.

Our precious child would want the best for us. "Have joy for the birdsong each morning. Have peace in a star lit night."

--Theresa Farmer, Tampa, Florida, In loving

memory of Ty Kristan Robertson Bereaved Parents of the USA

There Is No Place

Restless is my soul; broken is my heart.
My brain is an undefined maze of thoughts.
The anger swells so savagely within my breast,
And the revenge I feel will leave me no rest.
The pain is so unbearable in my heart,
I feel that any moment it will shatter into parts.
I care not for the treasures life can bring,
For because of death, none of them mean anything.

The anger, the fear, the pain and the guilt,
All tear at me as if to gain control of my will.
The confusion has left me weak,
And unable to find the answers I seek.
Nevermore will I hold my beautiful, sweet,
precious Patty.

One shot, one second and eighteen years are gone.

A child is left without her mother.

A mother is left without her child.

--B. Virginia Hurley from the Journal of *A Mother's Broken Heart*

Do You Have Children?

How do I answer such a painful question?
Could they possibly understand my feelings for you? I have no one to hold, no one to call me Mommy. In their eyes, I am childless; I am not the same as before I had you. I love you, think of you, just as a mother would. If they could only see into my heart, they would know you are with me always.

Yes, I do have children...

--Joni Cross, TCF/DeSoto, Texas

Newly Bereaved...

Pain



Pain demands to be felt. It won't be rushed. It won't be pushed away or minimized. There is no set time line for grief. There is no bible verse or life truth that can lessen pain's grip. No matter how much we may try to push it away or pretend it isn't there, it manifests itself. There are no tricks or tips to lessening the agony. Pain is moving through darkness, one tiny step at a time with faith that eventually a ray of light will break through.

We honor our pain with tears and time. We honor our pain by acknowledging its heaviness and hurt. We honor it by recognizing loss and the hole it leaves behind. Moving on is not moving past, because your loss will always be with you. It's not getting over, because you don't get over losing a child. It's not running away or forgetting about, because you could never forget your child, and you don't run away from those you love. Moving on is surviving even when you're not sure you want to. It's breathing through the lump that's been in your throat since you can't remember when. It's reaching out to someone who's hurting, even if it's just for a moment. It's crying and laughing, and slowly, carefully, letting yourself feel again. It's noticing that your family and friends are still there—for you and with you. Moving on is what you've been doing all along, and you're still doing it. And we're still here—for you and with you.

--Kim Crown, Quad City Area Chpt. TCF, Moline IL

Seasoned Griever...

The Gifts You've Given Me

I left the need to know Why behind years ago.
 Instead, I practice finding peace with the inner turmoil,
 accepting the unacceptable,
 living my truth.
 You have given me the gift of uncertainty
 and thus, taught me to live in the Now.
 The fingers of your loss have quietly shaped me,
 molding away the sharp edges,
 my judgment of others,
 my innocence.
 You have given me the gift of Humility.
 You were a child, my child.
 Now you parent.
 Invisibly, quietly, from behind the veil,
 you show me the meaning of Life.
 You have given me the gift of Awareness.
 I am not the same.
 In losing you,
 I found my strength, my sorrow,
 my compassion, my
 Self.
 You have given me the gift of Suffering.
 These tears carry knowledge
 that through suffering came
 Understanding,
 and through understanding came

Forgiveness,
 and through forgiveness came
 Love.

You fluttered in my womb like a butterfly,
 and now you flutter in my soul,
 eternally a part of me.

Eternally giving.

--Sara Therese, TCF Tucson, AZ

Friends and Family...

Please Don't Forget About My Child Who Died



Please, don't forget about my child. This is my heartfelt plea. I know you love and care about my family. I know that you don't always understand nor do I expect you to. I know that you wouldn't want to cause more pain to our already aching hearts. So, you mention my child less for fear of stirring up the dust that has seemingly settled.

The truth is, the idea that my child will one day be forgotten is one of my greatest fears. The less you talk about him the more that fear feels like a reality. I don't expect him to be the topic of every conversation. I don't expect you to mention him every time I see you. Perhaps at one time or another, I wanted that. But time has taken me further and further away from the early days of deep, suffocating grief. Even though I am always reluctant to admit it, I know the world has carried on. But what I need and what I want now is just to know that he has not been forgotten.

Maybe that means the occasional, "I thought about him the other day..." but mostly it means I need you to remember the important day he was born and the day he died. You see my friend, I don't expect you to fix any of this. And really all I need is to know that his name can be mentioned without fear, without guilt, and without uncertainty. I need to know that he is remembered because, at the very least, he deserves that. He does not deserve to be swept under a rug because you fear my tearful response. Or because you think that my grief has subsided. Or because you have moved on. Or because you have trouble talking about him.

He deserves better than to be forgotten or remain unmentioned. After all, he is still my child. My child is a huge part of who I am now. You know this. His name and his face replay in my mind

every single day. Even the days I smile or the days when joy washes over me. He is still at the heart of who I am now. And I need you to know that it's okay. It is okay to speak his name whether it is a good day, bad day, or a sad day. It's okay and it's what I need from time to time.

I need to be reassured that his life holds within it so much value, still. I need to know that his story is not over and his story has not been forgotten, even though he has been gone for some time now. I need to know that I do not remember him alone. And all it takes to remind me of these things is to say his precious name. I don't need gifts, I don't need flowers or cards. I just need you to say his name aloud, unapologetically, and unprovoked. I need you to remember the significance of important days like his birthday. Because while they are normal average days to you, they are days that we remember, that we mourn. They are days that bring up extremely complicated feelings. It doesn't matter how many years have passed. These days are significant to my family. And they always will be.

So please, please don't forget about my child. The greatest gift you can give to my family is the gift of remembrance. It costs you nothing. It requires very little. Yet it is more precious than gold. Hearing my child's name is the greatest reminder that he has not been forgotten. And there is nothing that I want more.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com> 10/13/16
BPUSA, Saint Louis, MO

Welcome...



Deep grief sometimes is almost like a specific location, a coordinate on a map of time. When you are standing in that forest of sorrow, you cannot imagine that you could ever find your way to a better place. But if someone can assure you that they themselves have stood in that same place, and now have moved on, sometimes this will bring hope. --Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*
Editor's note: The reassurance that you can survive the loss of a child is demonstrated at every meeting. Join us as we share what helps and what we still struggle with...How TCF can make a huge difference in your loss.

Let your tears come. Let them water your soul.
~ Eileen Mayhew ~

Book In Review...



Excerpt taken from the book, *After You* by Jojo Moyes Honest answers and quotes that every bereaved parent should read.

"Okay. Well. Here's a real question. How long do you think it takes to get over someone dying? Someone you really loved, I mean." I'm not sure why I asked him. It was almost cruelly blunt, given his circumstances... Sam's eyes widened a little. "Woah. Well . . .", he peered down at his mug, and then out at the shadowy fields ". . . "I'm not sure you ever do." "That's cheery." "No. Really. I've thought about it a lot. You learn to live with it, with them. Because they do stay with you, even if they're not living, breathing people any more. It's not the same crushing grief you felt at first, the kind that swamps you, and makes you want to cry in the wrong places, and get irrationally angry with all the idiots who are still alive when the person you love is dead. It's just something you learn to accommodate. Like adapting around a hole. I don't know. It's like you become ... a doughnut instead of a bun."

Helpful Hints...



Grieving is bits of many things - memories, regrets, reminders - each of which bears its own special weight in our burden of sorrow. Each bit has to be gone through patiently, silently, painfully, like one goes through old papers in a long-forgotten trunk. Considering each one separately, remembering, and assigning it to some new box within our hearts. Healing, too, is bits of many things: smiles which multiply as the days pass; chilling remembrances turned warm by the returning sun. A day will come when there will be more of healing than of grieving, and reasons for joy will begin to pile up in the freshly-swept rooms of our lives.
--From *Safe Passage* by Molly Fumia

The heart stops briefly when a child dies
A breathless pain as you
acknowledge the news.
And that one who held your hand
Moves from your outside
To your inside...
Slowly,
your heart adjusts to its new weight.
-Author Unknown

The Nutshell

I put your box of toys away I'd brought down from the shelf.
 I sorted all the photographs of you with no one else.
 It took me many hours as I worked through all my tears,
 and wondered how a nutshell could contain your wondrous years.
 I had your vivid videos from home and Disney World.
 I had those with your trophies and your hair all up in curls.
 I had your school art projects you had done while still a child
 and superstar Math papers you had struggled with awhile.
 I had the songs and poems and the books you'd made for me.
 And all these things and more made up our special memories.
 But that was not the nutshell others somehow had perceived.
 Instead, they much preferred a detailed death and history.
 "To put it in a nutshell" then became my chosen way;
 attempting to describe your horrifying holiday.
 Each time a thoughtful friend called wanting details with the news,
 it ripped right through my aching soul.
 My mind was still confused.
 Recalling detailed memories blurred by the death of you:
 to put them in that nutshell was the hardest thing to do.
 The lump caught in my throat could not be soothed with clarity,
 as that was not forthcoming in the reasons given me.
 The shock was like the world and all its weight was on my back
 and I wished for less pain with maybe 50 heart attacks.
 But my wish wasn't granted. You were gone. You'd died alone
 with no heartfelt goodbyes while God sat on His selfish throne.
 Minutely-detailed minutes still torment my aching heart
 and how that fateful morning just keeps tearing me

apart.

I would have been there for you if you'd just called out my name,
 but God had other plans and now my life's forever changed.

I'm told to let you go, dear; maybe find a peaceful way.

But still I'm hurting, honey, every night and dreary day.

--Cary Gregory, BPUSA St Louis

Spring Thaws the Wounded Heart



That first Spring came too soon

Why did the daffodils

show sunny faces

around the gravestone?

Why did warm breezes

blow clouds away?

My world, cold gray dismal

had no room for this season.

Now years later

the blossoms of love

hope and healing

have broken through

grounds of utter despair

warmed by memories of you.

I join the daffodils

bringing my own smile.

--Alice J. Wisler

"Yesterday I"

Yesterday I realized

The value of a second

The value of a minute

The value of life.

Yesterday I realized

The value of a stranger

whose life is now in your hands.

Dad, Grandpa, Mom, Grandma,

Sister, Brother, Son, Daughter,

Lover and Friend, these words

Now have a value.

They are

no longer just words.

Yesterday I realized the value of a family

and the value of being loved.

--Jamie O'Neill, Isabella's mom

South Suburban IL Chapter Member



Troy Akasaka
Born: 1/91 Died: 2/15
Parents: Jay & Sharon Akasaka

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Jeremiah Bell
Born: 1/88 Died: 6/15
Mother: Angela Albarez

Scott Berkovitz
Born: 5/88 Died: 1/16
Parents: Carl Berkovitz & Maria Moore

Noah Bernstein
Born: 6/87 Died: 2/17
Mother: Beth Bernstein

Cheiann Jayda Berry
Born: 12/2001 Died: 7/16
Mother: Kristina Berry

Alex James Bonstein
Born: 11/91 Died: 7/16
Mother: Cynthia Sanchez

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

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

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

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

Matthew Clifford
Born: 1/80 Died: 3/15
Parents: Bob & Melissa Clifford

Aaron Christopher Cochran
Born: 11/90 Died: 9/12
Mother: Julia Carr

Hannah Elizabeth Cortez
Born: 9/92 Died: 7/13
Parents: Rafael & Shari Cortez

Mike Sebastian Cortez
Born: 5/97 Died: 6/17
Mother: Rita Cortez

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

Dax Jordan Quintana Dantas De Oliveria
Born: 6/17 Died: 8/17
Parents: Alexandar & Sanderson
Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

Daniel Elijah Day
Born: 4/93 Died: 5/16
Mother: Kristen Day

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

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

Michael John Dornbach
Born: 7/60 Died: 10/17
Parents: Maria Trilieggi &
Edward Dornbach

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lexie Rose Gilpin
Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09
Mother: Michele Gilpin

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

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

Steven Ishikawa
Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17
Mother: Miki Ishikawa

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

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

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

Scott Koller
Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15
Mother: Betty Benson

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

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

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



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

Joseph Licciardone
Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16
Parents: Connie & Leo Licciardone

Gaby Lindeman
Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12
Parents: Gilberto & Graciela Rodriguez

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

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

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

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

Travis Frederick Marton
Born: 10/91 Died: 1/15
Mother: Ricki Marton

Max McCurdy
Born: 4/05 Died: 8/15
Parents: Derk & Akemi McCurdy

Joseph Mc Coy
Born: 9/11 Died: 11/14
Mother: Amy McCoy

Sarah Mc Donald
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/23
Parents: Tom & Shideh
Mc Donald

Jeremy Stewert Mead
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14
Mother: Carol Mead

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

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

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

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

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

Jacki Montoya
Born: 10/89 Died: 7/15
Mother: Theresa Montoya

Joshua Montoya
Born: 4/15 Died: 7/15
Grandmother: Theresa Montoya

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

Danielle Murillo
Born: 5/96 Died: 4/14
Parents: Cheryl Outlaw &
Manuel Murillo

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

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

Lisa Nakamaru
Born: 12/93 Died: 10/14
Mother: Grace Nakamaru

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

Stephanie Sue Newkirk
Born: 12/67 Died: 10/15
Mother: Cindy McCoy

Steven Scott Nussbaum
Born: 5/61 Died: 11/15
Parents: Will & Gloria Nussbaum

Stephanie Sue Newkirk
Born: 12/67 - Died: 10/05
Mother: Cynthia McCoy

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

Isabella Ofsanko
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15
Mother: Desiree Palmer

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

Jessica Perez
Born: 5/89 Died: 10/03
Sister: Monica Perez

Andrew Periaswamy
Born: 5/97 Died: 10/16
Parents: Megala & Xavier Periaswamy

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

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

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

Sarah Lynne Redding
Born: 12/80 Died: 12/05
Parents: Linda Redding

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

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

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

Danny Ryan
Born: 07/79 Died: 10/15
Parents: Mike & Andrea Ryan

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

Daniela Mora Saldana
Born: 3/17 Died: 3/17
Mother: Rosa Saldana

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

Phillip Ruben Sandoval
Born: 7/84 - Died: 6/16
Parents: Valerie & Joe Desjardin

Andrew Sankus
Born: 4/71 Died: 8/15
Mother: Mary Sankus

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

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

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

Paul Slater
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

Catrina Sol Torres
Born: 12/16 Died: 12/16
Mother: Sheri Torres

Dale Lee Soto
Born: 7/94 Died: 5/11
Mother: Monique Soto

Patrik Stezinger
Born: 1/89 Died: 8/17
Parents: Raul & Rosemary Mosher

Jonathan David Streisand
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13
Parents: Pricilla & David Streisand

Kenneth Tahan
Born: 2/66 Died: 7/16
Parents: Shirley & Joseph Tahan

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

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

Laura C. Toomey
Born: 1/61 Died: 12/78
Mother: Michael & Elizabeth Toomey

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

Catarina Sol Torres
Born: 12/16 Died: 12/16
Mother: Marcus & Vanessa Torres

Carlos Valdez
Born: 01/61 Died: 01/12
Parents: Antonia & Refugio Valdez

Vance C. Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 3/12
Parents: Carlos & Maria Valdez

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

Manuel Vargas III
Born: 3/95 - Died: 5/15
Father: Manuel Vargas

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

Dovan Vincent Wing
Born: 6/83 Died: 9/17
Mother: Becky Wing

Aaron Young
Born: 9/74 Died: 6/15
Mother: Sheila Young

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.)

* Please remember we are always working a month in advance and need your tributes by the first of the month preceding the actual birthday.

A Birthday Tribute to: Alex Mantyla Mar. 1969 - Aug. 2009



Dear Alex,

On a recent afternoon, your dad came across the old camcorder I had given to him for his first Father's Day back in 1989. To his surprise, there was a tape inside it that we'd all but forgotten. Later that night, he put it on his computer to view it, so he could edit, if necessary, and transfer it to a DVD. After watching it for a few minutes, he called me over to take a look at the last few minutes of the video. It started with you, sitting in the dark by a campfire, holding your guitar. You were wearing a pair of jeans and a gray hoodie that was pulled over your head. I realized it was a video of the last camping trip you and your dad had taken to Sequoia Park in 2005.

Smiling up at the camera, you asked Dad if he was filming. He gave you a cue and you started to play. You began finger-picking a beautiful, lively tune. It sounded classical but I didn't know its title. I did know it was totally different than your favorite, Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train." Later we learned it was the "Gigue from Partita 2" by Bach. Who knew?

As your fingers nimbly moved over your guitar, it was really beautiful to watch. I realized I'd forgotten how long your fingers were. And your hands were

those of a young man, not the pudgy, little dimpled ones remembered from your kindergarten class picture. When you finished playing, you smiled up at the camera and, with a little laugh, said "Yeah. I did it!" Yes, Alex. You did it. You did that and so many other great things in your short life. We miss you every day but we are eternally grateful for the years we spent with you. Thanks for watching over us.

Love, Mom and Dad

For Siblings...



My Sister

I am not sure where to start. My older sister, Lezlie, died on October 1, 1997. It has been a little more than four months and I still catch my breath and start to tear up when someone mentions her name. I am a private griever, I guess. When I heard the news that she was in the ER, I fell to my knees and prayed to God. I told Him I was going to put this in His hands and that it was up to Him now--as if it was not earlier.

"She did not make it." These are the words that I heard my father say through a cloud of tears and pain. While holding my mother, he explained that she was gone. My immediate reaction was to cry. I really did not know what this would mean. I am slowly finding out just what it does.

What do we do now? I wanted to take immediate action, calling relatives, the minister, and helping in a time when my parents needed someone to lean on. I was bound and determined to be the strong one for a while. And I was.

As we made funeral arrangements and memorial plans, I, like the rest of them, sat in silence as the tears and pain flowed from my eyes. It hurt. But I was determined to remain strong for my children and for my family who seemed to be crumbling right before my very eyes. A very difficult thing to do for a little girl who thinks her daddy is the strongest person she has ever known.

I dreaded the viewing at the funeral home. I did not want to go to the funeral home and see her like that, not even one last time. My parents insisted it would be a good thing for all of us. As the time approached, I was more and more frustrated at the prospect of falling apart upon seeing her. However, as we entered the funeral home and went into the room where her body lay at rest, something

happened. I could not shed a tear. It was as if my brain and body (and soul, for that matter) went on autopilot. I sat quietly on the first row watching my father fall to his knees and sob. My mother could not speak. My baby sister holding on to them both, in tears. I was on the outside looking in on the strangest and yet saddest heartbreaking moment of my life. But that's just it: I was on the outside looking in. I was the strong one, but not by choice. I did not consciously decide to lock out my feelings and, yet, the entire episode was painful. I can't explain my reaction.

I went through the memorial service with minimal tears. I greeted those wishing to personally offer condolences because I know my family was struggling with having to look them in the eyes and share their pain along with their own.

But then I saw my friend, Julie. Julie has survived through the same experience I am going through. The key word is survived. As I hugged her, my strength lapsed and I started to cry, sort of uncontrollably. This was good. Julie told me that "things are never going to get better." I thought to myself, what a terrible thing to say to someone in my circumstance, but she was right. Her honesty now is appreciated. She was right. Things will never get better, we just learn to handle and cope. I am grateful for her kindness and friendship. We belong to a club that I hope no one will ever have to join. We have lost a piece of ourselves and our family will never be the same. This is a permanent state.

I still cry. I am able to get through a conversation using her name without crying – well, at least sometimes. But there are times; I call them "moments of truth," that I am starting to experience. The first occurred on December 1, 1997. I was sitting having lunch with my coworkers. We were not talking about anything related to my loss but all of a sudden, I blurted out, "Oh, my God, it's been two months since my sister died." I had to get up and run. It's odd I seem to have this need to get up and bolt frequently. I mostly control it and move on to something else, but the urge is still present and strong.

There are songs, music, books, and a little newsletter published by The Compassionate Friends that will bring me to uncontrolled grieving. I sit and hold my children as I totally let go of all the pent-up pain and sadness. It's funny, I have remained strong for them and in my weakest moments they are all I hold on to.

Anyway, these “moments of truth” come frequently. The closest analogy I can think of to explain this whole experience is that I am like a child whose nose is pressed up against the window pane of life when all of a sudden, the window shatters. I am so busy trying to pick up the pieces to protect the others and insure that no one else gets hurt that I do not realize until much later that my arms and hands are bleeding heavily. I can finally see the devastation and now feel the pain.
 --Kim Bernal, in memory of my sister, Lezlie Dyane Davis TCF Sugar Land-Southwest Houston, TX

I Will Miss You

I feel great anxiety now that your time is growing short.
 Seven weeks since we first heard the word “Cancer”.
 The time is way too early—
 Days, weeks, and years too early.
 What of our plans?
 I love you.
 I want you to stay.
 Please Lord let her stay with us.
 But I also feel your pain.
 I see it on your face.
 I see it in your body.
 Your sad eyes say you want to stay.
 With all your might you want to stay.
 But the pain is great—overpowering.
 How helpless I feel.
 Sitting by your bed.
 Holding your hand.
 Watching you sleep.
 I will miss you.
 Memories come to me.
 I smile then sadness washes over me.
 I cry.
 Finally I realize...
 Your breathing is quieter and much slower now.
 Peace has relaxed the anxious lines on your face—
 Your beautiful face.
 At last relief has come to you...but not to me.
 Your soul spirit is lifted.
 He has taken you home.
 I will miss you.
 Oh, how I'll miss you.
 --Linda Jo Palo
 In loving memory of my sister, Corinne

For Grandparents...



Hope

By Margaret Gerner, Arthur's Mom and Emily's Grandmother

I sat down regularly to read the many newsletters that I receive from the chapters across the county. Most of the time there were articles in them that made me cry a little. I read about children who are dead and parents who were hurting, but never did I come away from those reading sessions depressed. I came away with hope, hope that the searing torment does lessen and eventually give way to warm, loving memories of our child!

When we are in the deepest throes of our grief, when our beloved child has just recently been snatched from life by a tragic accident or succumbed to a fatal illness, or died in some other way, can we believe we can ever be happy again? When to simply get up in the morning is a major accomplishment, can we believe that we will ever be able to function with enthusiasm or purpose? When every thought of our children brings excruciating pain, can we believe that we will someday be able to think of him/her and smile? I know it is hard to believe that this will ever happen, but it will.

The words used in defining HOPE are expect, trust, anticipate, wish, desire and confident. These are the key words. If we expect, trust and anticipate feeling better, we will in time. If we wish it and are confident, the day will come when we will feel better. Of course, it doesn't just happen. It takes long hard grief work. It takes many painful hours of allowing ourselves to go through our grief. It takes patience and it takes time. But know you will come to the light at the end of the tunnel. Know that there is hope. Know that many bereaved parents and grandparents who have been in the same painful place that you are now have found life meaningful again. Know that you will too.

--Margaret Gerner

From Our Members...



When a rainbow appears, it does not mean that the storm never happened or that we are not still dealing with its aftermath. It means that something

beautiful and full of light has appeared in the midst of the darkness and clouds. Storm clouds may still hover, but the rainbow provides a counterbalance of color, energy and hope.

--Franchesca Cox Quad City TCF, Moline IL
Submitted by Linda Curtis

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

IMPORTANT REMINDER: We need to update our records and have not heard from many members... If you have already responded, thank-you. You do not need to respond again. If you have not, please take a moment and e-mail or fill out and mail the update form so we know you still want to get the newsletter. If you want your child listed in the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter we need to know. You may have noticed the Our Children Remembered section in the Feb. newsletter was considerably shortened, because I hadn't heard from you regarding the update for our data base. If your child was automatically deleted from this page, just let me know and I will be happy to put them back in... I just need to hear from you.

Why the update is needed: Every time a newsletter is returned to us because of an address change, we are charged for that service. Also, due to the postage increase and our printing costs, we periodically update our data base to make sure we are not sending newsletters to those who no longer read them. Shortening this section of the newsletter also allows us to have more space for articles.

It came as a shock to some members when they went to read the newsletter and their child was not listed because they had not responded to previous requests. We want to honor all our children, and seeing their names in print reinforces that they are not forgotten. So if you want your child included please let me know.

Please, simply fill out this form and return to P.O. Box 11171, Torrance CA 90510-1171. You have the choice of getting newsletters in the mail or online. Please mail this form, e-mail us at Lynntcf@aol.com or call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and leave a message.

There is no charge for this newsletter. However, if you would like to make a year-end

donation to help with our postage expenses or library materials, please include it in the same envelope. Since our chapter depends upon voluntary contributions to cover operational costs, donations are very much needed and appreciated. To dedicate the donation, please enclose the regular donation form on the last page of the newsletter with your message.

Thank you, TCF South Bay/L.A. Chapter

Please print **clearly** the following information:

Name _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- All my information is the same.
- Please delete my name from the newsletter list.
- I wish to receive the newsletter by mail. **OR**
- I wish to receive the newsletter online.
- I can volunteer to help our chapter in honor of my child. Please call to discuss my options.
- Yes, I want to help ... A donation is enclosed in memory of _____

For corrections or to add you child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter: Please print your information *the way you want it to be listed* on the Our Children Remembered section of our chapter newsletter.

Child/Children's Name (including last name) _____
Birth date(s) _____
Death date(s) _____
Parents' Names (including last name) _____

Thank you for taking time to fill out this form and returning it to: The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chapter, P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171

Get Your Photo Buttons... Photo

buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, simply bring a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) to any of our chapter meetings and Ken can make them for you. There is no cost. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

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, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. Just a Hint: If you plan to leave \$\$ at the TCF meeting, you might want to make it by check so you can receive an IRS deduction. No amount is too small and they are needed to keep our chapter going.

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



Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior

meeting. (Example: March 1st for April birthdays). Otherwise they will appear if space permits or in the following month's issue.



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

Linda Zelik (chapter leader).....(310) 370-1645
 Mary Sankus (chapter do-leader)...(310)648-4878
 Kitty Edler.....(310) 541-8221
 Richard Leach (grandchild).....(310) 833-5213
 Kristy Mueller (sibling).....(310) 373-9977

REGIONAL COORDINATOR

Olivia Garcia.....(818) 736-7380

Our Website... Joe Zelik is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your correct e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 to update by phone, or e-mail me at Lynntcf@aol.com

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. 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 Linda 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: Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also Spanish Support Group, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196. ***NEW: Our House Grief Support Center has Free General Grief Support Group for Spanish speaking Adults in our area.**

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. 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. (310) 546-6407

TORRANCE MEMORIAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICES: (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

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

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

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

Camp Comfort Zone - Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (310) 483-8313.

Other Grief Support Websites...

agast.org (for grandparents)	groww.com
goodgriefresources.com	childloss.com
beyondindogp.com	griefwatch.dom
angelmoms.com	babysteps.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	opentohope.com
taps.org (military death)	alivealone.org
bereavedparentsusa.org	save.org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	

LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS

Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
Newport Beach (917) 703-3414 3rd Wed.
Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

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 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Ken Konopasek
 WEBSITE: Joe Zelik

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Ken Konopasek
Kitty Edler	Susan Kass
Mary Sankos	

FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE...

The Compassionate Friends is pleased to

announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the **41st TCF National Conference** on July 27-29, 2018. "Gateway to Hope and Healing" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. We'll keep you updated with details as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter

TCF National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at www.compassionatefriends.org and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

Tcf National Office Seeks Your Stories and Articles...

For many years, The Compassionate Friends National Office has provided on its Leadership site stories and poems by TCF members that can be published in Chapter newsletters around the country. Currently, the Newsletter Editor Database has over 500 stories and 200 poems. The National Office would like to include your personal grief related stories and poems. Please submit your articles and poems to: sara@compassionatefriends.org. Please include your name and chapter affiliation.

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

The National Office of TCF has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. The sessions last an hour and have trained moderators present. For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click "Online Support" listed under the Find Support menu. For a complete schedule and to register for Online

Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register. There is also a closed group chat room for specific topics that you need to register for.

Closed Group Chat... TCF National has several closed Facebook groups you may find helpful on your grief journey. Click the blue link above to be connected and request to join.

TCF - Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Barbara Allen and Mary Lemley

TCF - Loss to Suicide *Moderators: Cathy*

Seehuetter and Donna Adams

TCF - Loss to Homicide *Moderators: Debbie Floyd and Kathleen Willoughby*

TCF - Infant and Toddler Loss *Moderators: Susan Peavler and Tiffany Barraso*

TCF - Sibling Loss to Substance Related Causes

Moderators: Andrea Keller and Barbara Allen

The Compassionate Friends Sounds of the Siblings (for bereaved siblings) *Moderators: Tracy Milne and Keith Singer*

TCF - Loss of a Grandchild *Moderators: Betty Farrel and Jennifer Sue Hale*

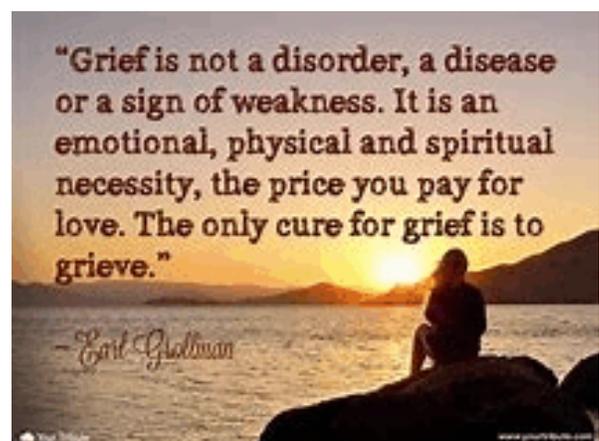
TCF - Loss to Miscarriage or Stillbirth *Moderators: Kelly Kittel and Kenzie Janzen*

TCF - Loss of an Only Child/All Your Children *Moderators: Lisa Ridge and Vicki Woods-Ozias*

TCF - Loss to a Drunk/Impaired Driver *Moderators: Robin Landry and Rebecca Perkins*

TCF - Loss to Cancer *Moderators: Lee Meyerson, Michelle Setzer, Marguerite Caraway Ward*

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.



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

The Compassionate Friends is a totally self-supporting organization.
Our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, but we do have operating costs.

Your donations are what keeps our chapter going.

Please consider giving a donation in your loved one's name.

In loving memory of Emily Matilda Kass, 6/95 - 3/06. Missing you and Loving you Forever
Love, Mom & Jessica

In loving memory of Mark Galper, 2/62 - 5/97. I miss you and love you up to the sky!
Love, Mom

A year-end donation in loving memory of John Francis Cleary, 12/74 - 8/93.
Love, Mom

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

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

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

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ Sent From _____

Tribute _____

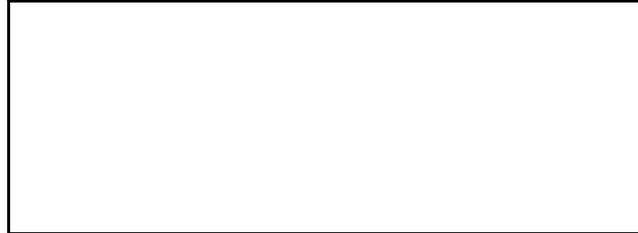
To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month or it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
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MARCH 2018

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,
just as your hope becomes my hope.
We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.
We are young, and we are old.
Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh
and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.
Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,
while some of us are struggling to find answers.
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,
while others radiate an inner peace.
But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other
our love for the children who have died.
We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love
to share the pain as well as the joy,
share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts,
and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.
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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing or have a new address, please contact us.