



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

JUNE 2018 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be June 7th., the first Thursday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: June only, The Sizzler,
2880 Sepulveda Bl, Torrance for our special event

Regular Meetings: 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 **Thursday** (new day of the week), June 7th meeting will be our balloon lift-off and remembrance program instead of our regular meeting. We are meeting at The Sizzler restaurant this year. Friends and family are invited. Remember your picture buttons.

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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(Thursdays are our new day of the week for all meetings. This month only, we also have a different location for the balloon liftoff.) The Thursday, June 7th meeting will be held at The Sizzler, 2880 Sepulveda Bl. in Torrance for our balloon liftoff and remembrance program instead of our regular meeting. Remember to wear your picture buttons. Friends and family are invited. Come join us for this special event.

Since we can not do our annual balloon liftoff at the Neighborhood church this year we are trying something different. Instead of the pot-luck, we will be having dinner at Sizzler. The June 7th meeting will take place in the private banquet meeting room at Sizzler. **(Use the front entrance, then follow the signs for the banquet room.)** We will gather in the banquet room and start the program at 7 PM. After we write our messages to our children, we will use the private exit to the parking lot to gather as a group and release the balloons (which are biodegradable, including the string & paper). People can individually order and pay for their dinners which will be delivered to the banquet room. We will proceed with our short program while the food is getting ready. Remember to bring any tribute to your child that you want to read. We hope you and your friends and family will join us for this special tribute to our children.

This newsletter will address June events while grieving. Father's Day, graduations, and upcoming weddings may bring up unresolved feelings. Your child should have been going to summer camp, proms, graduating, looking forward to summer vacation, maybe participating in a wedding, or even getting married. Since he/she is not here, do we still partake? Do we continue the way we used to do things or make adjustments as needed? And what about taking a trip? Can we even entertain the thought of going on vacation this year?

Summer is almost here and the thought of planning a vacation can be overwhelming. The doubts begin to haunt us. How can we even think of making plans to have fun ... it's all we can do to get through a regular day, let alone planning and going on a trip of some kind. We need to examine ways we can look ahead to the summer, starting off with our annual balloon liftoff.

When someone dies, you don't get over your grief by forgetting, you get through your grief by remembering.
(Author unknown)

Friends and Family are Invited to our Balloon Liftoff and Dinner

In June, instead of a regular meeting, we have our traditional dinner and balloon liftoff to honor the memory of our children. Friends and family are invited to attend as we write messages of love to our children and send them off together. This is a time to reaffirm the love that we still share for our child with our friends and family... Even though our children are not here with us physically, they are still loved and remembered.

The balloon liftoff is one way siblings have to see how their brothers and sisters will always be an important part of the family. Just like with the adults in our chapter, it gives them a chance to see that other siblings have also gone through a similar loss. This kindred feeling helps them realize they are not the only kid to lose a brother or sister, which helps them in their own grief.

Please arrive promptly so we have time to write our messages and as a group, send the balloons off together. We will then return inside to eat and have a remembrance program. Instead of bringing food for a pot-luck, we are going the restaurant route this year.

If you would like to make a picture button of your child to wear at the event, call Ken at (310) 544-6690 and he will have them ready for you. The button machine will also be at the balloon liftoff. If you would like a picture button made, bring a picture with you for each button you would like made. Color Xerox pictures work great. These buttons are free, but donations are welcome. We will also have the tributes and pictures from our memory book out on display. If you haven't brought a picture in for the memory book, now is a good time.

Balloon Lift-Off

We stand together – yet each alone – tightly holding our balloons by the string, with our hand written messages to our children carefully tied at the end. At a signal we release our grasp and the balloons soar upward, carried by the brisk wind. Moving quickly, they strangely seem to stay together, like a group of children running across a field.

No one says a word. We just stand and watch, each of us lost in their own thoughts, eyes fixed on that special balloon, watching as it goes higher and higher, growing smaller and smaller until it



disappears, no matter how hard we strain to see. Like our children, we know that they are still there – just no longer in our sight. It is a painful, bittersweet experience.

I guess I have attended close to a dozen balloon lift-offs in the years since my son died, and my feelings are always the same. There is the awful pain of knowing that – like our children – we can't call them back, can't hold them again – can't even see them again. And at the same time, there is the unspoken deep-down hope that somehow our child knows about that special balloon and its message of love. With the simple faith of a child writing a letter to Santa we fantasize that our message will be received and read – that somehow a tangible connection has been made with our child if only for a brief moment. It is a powerful moment. It is a poignant moment that we will all carry in our hearts and thoughts for days to come. And for weeks to come we will recapture that precious moment every time we see a balloon soar toward the heavens

--Carole Ragland, TCF Houston West Chpt.

The Month of June

June along with all of its many usual celebrations has arrived. This month brings us: Father's Day, the end of the school year, graduations, and naturally there will be some of us who will face the dream June weddings of children from other families and friends instead of our own.

June can become a most overwhelmingly busy month by comparison to the imaginary lazy days of summer one might conjure up in the corner of one's mind. So much for tranquility and escape in the trials of overcoming the whip of grief's blow!

Yet, on the other side of the story, June, complete with the entire bustle, will be loyal. June will still bring the grieving parent warm summer nights to stroll and ponder over old consoling memories under star lit skies. June will be faithful to still soft breezes in the cemeteries and special places we all visit to quietly cry. June is one of those caring months that tries to calm one's soul, promising to give each of us a small measure of comfort whenever possible. For this I am always thankful.

My prayer this month is that June will wrap her arms around each who grieve and embrace you with peacefulness beyond this world. May we always remember our children are within our hearts

and we walk this path among compassionate friends!

--Central Oregon TCF newsletter



Father's Day Revisited

Now I can look back upon that first Father's Day, the first after the death of our son Jeff. I was a mess, a man without hope, with little or no reason for living, deep in my own depressive grief. I could not share any joy with others. I look back now, wondering how I could have treated my wife and children as I did while they were trying to celebrate in my honor. Inside I was crying out, "What are these useless gifts? Don't you know the only gift I want is to have my son back?"

But it was the love, caring, understanding and nurturing of those loved ones which brought me so far from that first Father's Day. Now I can enjoy the joy of others. I can laugh once again. There is a life worth living.

For all those other fathers for whom this is the first Father's Day without your child, have the best day you can, with the understanding other fathers are with you on this day. One day, you too will be able to revisit this first Father's Day.

I see the grief
behind your earnest eyes.
(You would give anything
to have your child again.)

I feel the helplessness
behind your silent anguish.
(You would give anything
to take this hurt away.)

I know you learned
to keep your tears in hiding.
And you were taught
few words to speak for solace,
– not yours, not mine.

I see the grief
Behind your earnest eyes.
And I will know
to understand and trust you,
loving father.

Have a peaceful Father's Day.

--Paul Kinney, BP/USA, Louisville, KY

Graduation

Graduation time approaches bringing with it so many memories. If our child achieved High School Graduation or indeed any of the other graduations

that mark the important life passages, we can count on reliving every moment in detail. The pride, the parties, the excitement and also the fear that some tragedy would strike because of Grad celebrations. Some of us cautioned, counseled and held our breath, only to have death come anyway some other time and place. Some of us had that nightmare come true and Graduation will forever signal the saddest anniversary of our lives.

In the instances when our children did not live long enough to achieve these milestones we are left with the emptiness of what might have been. We watch their friends or possible contemporaries moving into the next phase of life while our child is forever frozen into a block of time that never changes and sometimes fades into nothingness for others in our lives.

I hope that when Graduation time rolls around again that some of us will have come far enough to be able to acknowledge the achievements of our young friends. They are all precious children and deserve our praise and support. We honor our own children when we celebrate and affirm the youth all around us.

--Susan Presler BP/USA Western NY chapter.



That First Summer Vacation

Summer time is here and with it you may be planning a vacation. If you have recently suffered the death of your child, that first vacation can be very difficult. I would like to share with you our experience the first time we took a vacation after our son, Paul, died. I have included some suggestions to help you through your first vacation and to help you plan around your grief. If any of you are planning a vacation, here are some suggestions that may help:

-Be gentle with yourself. Don't expect too much on your first vacation. Remember as bereaved parents, the first time we do anything without our kids is tough whether it be going to the movies, shopping or on a vacation.

-Plan to do some grief work because you will, planned or not. Give yourself time enough on the trip if you have a bad day so that you can just do what you feel like doing.

-Know that your child will be on your mind day and night just as he or she is at home. Our grief goes with us.

-Plan to do something your child would have loved to do, but did not get a chance to. Plan this in his

or her memory.

-If you plan to visit relatives for the first time since your child's death, remember they mean well even if they seem insensitive with their remarks. They have not lost a child and can't see through your eyes.

-If you have other children, remember them. They are also having a hard time coping on this vacation. Plan some activities that will be especially for them.

-Be especially careful to communicate with your spouse. Plan a vacation that is suitable for both of your needs. Remember you are both grieving for the same child, but we all grieve differently and in our own way.

-If you have been maintaining your child's grave site and feel guilty about leaving it unattended, let a family member or friend see to it while you are away. You need not feel guilty and it could fill a need for one of your family.

--Diana Hammock, TCF/Central Coast, Cal

My Child was Murdered...

Most people wrestle with the word murder, the horror, the ultimate violation. This death was preventable. The life of my child was violently and abruptly ended. Someone made the choice to reach into my life and rob me of my child. Murder is a brutal grief and nothing in my life prepared me for this experience.

The loss of a child by murder leads to an overwhelming and traumatic grief that throws the families into a life of turmoil. We, the survivors, are victimized, not only by the death of our child, but also by the circumstances of that death. The dimension of cruelty compounds the sense of sorrow and loss with feelings of anger, distrust and helplessness. The shock at receiving the information of the murder is experienced both mentally and physically.

We, the parents of murdered children must find ways to deal with our grief... find the support, the friends and activities that help ease the pain as we try to rebuild our lives. We need to find ways to channel the emotions of anger, helplessness and rage. We need to bring awareness to others that by standing and working together we can make this world as much safer place.

Murder grief may demand from you the ability to teach others about your needs while coping with this pain. No matter how deep your sorrow, you are not alone. Others have been there and will

help you share your load if you let them. Do not deny them the opportunity.

In many cases, the wounds keep being reopened. There is very little chance to heal or to move on. Life is living in a state of limbo. Lawyers, courts, judges and, more often than not, a live criminal blessed with civil rights controls your life.

Personal side effects experienced—

- * At times, I felt almost detached from my body... watching myself struggle from a distance.
- * Preoccupation with loss.
- * Horror about the pain and suffering that my child might have endured.
- * A need to know every detail about my child's death.
- * Panic attacks and intense emotional outbursts.
- * Flashbacks of receiving the notification and horrific images of the faces and reactions of family members.
- * Feeling alone, frightened, and knowing that others don't understand what you are going through.

The roller coaster of emotions caused by the murder are long lasting, sometimes followed by years of devastation as well as a daily struggle to go on. "...I knew I couldn't escape the pain. I knew I had to acknowledge it and I knew I had to have a purpose to go on. Members of The Compassionate Friends made that possible. They are the ones that have helped me through the horror and continue to do so. They are very special friends.

The only comforting thoughts that I can give to other parents who have had a child murdered is that healing does occur; the process is slow, but it will happen!"

--Marg Shand, mother of Sheldon



What To Tell The Children

What children might feel after losing someone they love to suicide and How do we explain suicide to children or young people?

What children might feel after losing someone they love to suicide:

- Abandoned - that the person who died didn't love them.
- Feel the death is their fault - if they should have loved the person more or behaved differently.
- Afraid that they will die too.
- Worried that someone else they love will die or worry about who will take care of them.

- Guilt - because they wished or thought of the person's death.
- Sad.
- Embarrassed - to see other people or to go back to school.
- Confused.
- Angry - with the person who died, at God, at everyone.
- Lonely.
- Denial - pretend like nothing happened.
- Numb - can't feel anything. Wish it would all just go away.

A child or adolescent may have a many mixed feelings or may feel "numb." Whatever they are feeling, remember your role as an adult is to help them and be supportive. Reassure the child that whatever feelings they might experience, they have permission to let them out. If they want to keep to themselves for a while, let them. Don't tell a child how they should or should not feel. Also, don't discourage them from expressing negative emotions like anger.

Age is a factor in understanding the type and amount of information to provide. Some children you can talk to about suicide with a 1- or 2-sentence answer; others might have continuous questions which they should be allowed to ask and to have answered.

The most important thing to remember is to be honest. Children will always find out about what happened at some point, so be honest.

When a child hears that someone "committed suicide" or died of suicide, one of their first questions might be, "What is suicide?" Some examples of explaining why suicide happens might be:

One way to explain is that people die in different ways - from cancer, heart attacks, car accidents, or old age for example. Suicide simply means that a person caused his or her own death intentionally, it doesn't have to mean more than that. However, also explaining that the person they loved caused their own death because they had an illness in their brain can also be helpful. If they press for more detail, use your discretion to help the child understand as much as is age appropriate.

"He had an illness in his brain (or mind) and he died."

"Her brain got very sick and she died."

"The brain is an organ of the body just like the heart, liver and kidneys. Sometimes it can get sick, just like other organs."

"She had an illness called depression and it caused her to die." If someone the child knows, or the child herself, is being treated for depression, it's critical to stress that only some people die from depression, not everyone. Remind her there are many options for getting help, like medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both.

"Our thoughts and feelings come from our brain, and sometimes a person's brain can get very sick - the sickness can cause a person to feel very badly inside. It also makes a person's thoughts get all jumbled and mixed up, so sometimes they can't think clearly. Some people can't think of any other way of stopping the hurt they feel inside. They don't understand that they don't have to feel that way, that they can get help."

It's important to note that there are people who were getting help for their depression and died anyway. Just as in other illnesses, a person can receive the best medical treatment available and still not survive. This can also be the case with depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

A child needs to understand that the person who died loved them, but that because of the illness he or she may have been unable to convey that or to think about how the child would feel after the death. The child needs to know that the suicide was not their fault, and that nothing they said or did, or didn't say or do, caused the death.

Some children might ask questions related to the morals of suicide - good/bad, right/wrong. It is best to steer clear of this, if possible. Suicide is none of these - it is something that happens when pain exceeds resources for coping with that pain. Whatever approach is taken when explaining suicide to children, they need to know they can talk about it and ask questions whenever they feel the need. They need to understand they won't always feel the way they do now, that things will get better, and that they'll be loved and taken care of no matter what.

Suggested Reading for Kids:

Bart Speaks Out: Breaking the Silence on Suicide
by Linda Goldman, M.S.

When Dinosaurs Die - A Guide to Understanding
Death by Laurie Krasny Brown & Marc Brown
The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide by Helen
Fitzgerald

Talking About Death: A Dialogue between Parent &
Child by Earl A. Grollman

--from Suicide Awareness Voices of Education
www.save.org --TCF Kamloops, B.C Spring 2014



Things Aren't Always As They Seem

"Is your baby a girl?" the woman inquired, as she eyed my four month-old Ellen, happily seated in her stroller in the crowded

department store restroom. My four year-old then held my hand as we inched toward a vacant stall.

"Yes, she is," I answered, but, as soon as the woman heard me she ran off. I thought this was strange, but was too busy situating Ethan in his stall to follow the woman with my eyes.

"Why did I bring them to the mall on a Saturday?" I pondered, as I peered at Ethan's feet under the door of his stall. Crowds are not my passion.

As I passed the time while waiting for Ethan, I couldn't stop thinking about the woman. I wondered why she had run off after I told her that Ellen was a girl. Before I had time for further analysis, I was distracted by Ethan who had finished going potty and was ready to tackle the mysterious blower shared by half a dozen wet hands. Baby Ellen was fast asleep, oblivious to the chaos around her. When Ethan's hands were nearly dry, we flowed with the crowd to the exit. Just before reaching the door, with people pushing behind us, I noticed her again—the woman who had asked about Ellen. She sat in a torn chair in the restroom lounge, and sobbed uncontrollably as she dabbed a ragged tissue on her reddened eyes. I wanted to ask what was wrong, but instead I moved with the crowd toward the exit.

After leaving the odor and heat of the restroom, the department store air was a relief, yet I couldn't stop thinking about the woman. I had thought it strange that she ran off after learning Ellen's gender. Most people make a fuss over my chubby blue eyed baby. Suddenly, I knew. The woman cried because her baby, probably a girl, had died. Seeing us brought her pain to the surface. I know that look in her eyes, and I know how she feels. I've been there.

When my daughter, Caroline, was stillborn nearly two years ago, my first trip to the mall was a painful one. It seemed like a convention of pregnant women and baby girls. My eyes had focused on the lace dresses, wicker bedroom sets, and smiling dolls—reminders of all that I had lost. Around me, families were laughing as they strolled the mall, and I felt singled out. What did I do

wrong? Why did my baby have to die?

I thought of the woman sobbing in the restroom lounge and how I must have represented her loss. The experience reminded me of a parable a close friend had shared with me shortly after Caroline's death. It goes as follows:

"Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family, rude to the angels, refused to let them stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead, the angels were offered a space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger of the two asked why the older angel had fixed the wall for this rude family, the elder's reply was, "Things aren't always as they seem."

The next night, the pair came to rest at the home of a very poor, and very hospitable, farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bedroom where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning, the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole source of income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel how she could have let this happen. "The first man had everything, yet you helped him," she accused. "The second man had little, but was willing to share everything, and you let his cow die."

"Things aren't always as they seem," the older angel replied. "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion two nights ago, I noticed there was gold stored in a hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed, and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it," she explained.

"Then, last night, as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave her the cow instead." She paused. "Things aren't always as they seem."

These days, when I stroll through the mall with my two beautiful children, I realize that on the outside my life looks picture perfect. But as I admire the store windows, alive with colorful dresses, Caroline comes to mind. She owns only one dress, and she'll wear it forever in her grave across town. A bittersweet tear streams down my cheek, yet I am able to smile at passerbys as I hug my kids just a little bit tighter. "Things aren't always as they seem."

--Rhonda Cloos, TCF Sugar Land, SW Houston, TX

Newly Bereaved...

Take Your Time



One of the hardest things about grief is the so-called "time table." You are told you should be feeling one way or the other. You are given a time to mourn by the outside world, and then you must be "over it." "Get on with your life." "Count your blessings."

All of this can make you both angry and afraid. Angry because (a) you don't WANT to "get over it," (b) you are "getting on" with your life in the best way you know how, and © your "blessings" have nothing whatsoever to do with the pain of your loss! Afraid because you are not having some of the feelings you think you should be having because you are not reacting "normally." There is a period of extreme shock that can last from a few weeks to several months; you may not feel anything except numbness for awhile. That's OK!

The best advice is...take your time. Be gentle with yourself. Do what you need to do, not what you think you should do. Don't clutter up your life with things that will exhaust you physically and weaken you emotionally. Remember, you are fighting the hardest battle you will ever have to face, so give yourself the best weapons you can. Rest; get in touch with your feelings, and talk. Say your child's name to anyone who will listen...take time...your time...to heal!

--Sandra Young, TCF, Knoxville, TN

Seasoned Greivers...

Going Back, Going Forward

As a national writer and speaker on grief, I am mostly recognized for the death of my nine-year-old son, Kelly James Carmody, who died of a malignant brain tumor in 1987. That event changed my life forever, but many may not know of other familial losses I have incurred that were also instrumental in forming my life. Like the corner pieces of a puzzle, our losses define the foundation, of our life portraits; they create our today.

I have now realized in a recent epiphany that for all the years I knew my mother, she was a bereaved parent. I have lived with a bereaved mom my whole life. Things now seem more transparent, and I understand her better than I ever

have before. I also am a bereaved parent now; I get it. I now look at my life and put all our family losses together and realize how much my mom lost. She had buried a young husband, her only sibling, three of her children, and three grandchildren, the first child having died before I was even born.

Five years before I came along, my mother gave birth to her fifth child John, who was healthy and full-term, but the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck, strangling him at birth. John's life was buried with his body and was never mentioned again; an unfortunate incident. "You move on; you get over it; you can have other children". She did, giving birth in 1955 to two more children, a boy and girl set of twins; me and my sister Sandy. In 1969, my father died at age 49. A year later my mother's only sister died, and in 1978 my older brother David died in a state mental institution. My mother continued to put each death behind her and move on with minimal tears and emotion. "Dead is dead; you buck up, get over it, and get on with your life."



In 1984 my twin sister, Sandy, was killed at age 29 with her two young sons in an auto accident. She had a set of 18-month-old boy/girl twins at home when she died. My mother reacted the same way; "What is done is done, son; we have to put it behind us."

I struggled to bury my grief away, and then less than two years later my son was diagnosed with cancer. I had to fight that fight to save my son, and put my sibling grief on hold for a long, long time. I was getting good at it. We were the twins, a curiosity and oddity being boy/girl twins, and some questionably intelligent people would seriously ask if we were identical. We were "the twins." Of course we did not dress alike and we each had our own friends, but we were special unto ourselves. We also shared our friends and had big parties together with quite a mix of everyone. I was a straight-A student, and she was not. She got pregnant young and never graduated. I went to college. She was Goofus; I was Gallant (an old cartoon found in a kid's magazine at the dentist's office). She was a fundamentalist Christian, and I am a New-Age seeker of enlightenment. As kids, Mom would make Sandy a devil's food chocolate cake; I would get the white angel food cake. We were so different in so many ways, but we were so much in touch in the wordless way that only twins would understand. I still feel the void of her

physical presence in my life big-time and always will. I still miss her so much, but I have felt a connection with her on a spirit level through the years in signs and dreams, and I know she is around always; even her children—now adults—feel her presence, someone they cannot even remember in life.

Grieving my son was the hardest challenge I have ever faced. His death was the straw that broke the camel's back; I felt totaled, beaten, and apathetic. I wallowed in a wasteland of broken dreams and non-ending despair that lasted for almost ten years. I grieved like I was taught and put it behind me, until one day I walked by a photo of my son and I dropped to my knees in newfound agony, screaming loudly to the heavens, "I cannot live like this. I cannot pretend this did not happen!"

I embraced the deaths of my son, my father, my brothers, my sister and her boys; I sucked it all in like a newborn taking its first breath. I started living and feeling my losses, grieving, mourning, and lamenting to all who would listen.

I was finally grieving fully for the first time in my life, and for the first time in ten years I saw beauty in the sunrise again. I got my life back, and I did not have to let go to do so. I only had to simply embrace it, not erase it. It is never too late to process your loss. I could not fully work through the enormity of the death of my son before I processed all my other losses in a proactive way. So many times the losses experienced by young children are marginalized. Whether they lose a parent or a sibling, they are expected to get over it quickly and encouraged to be strong. We learn at a young age to hide our feelings, and it may take years before we process the total assault to our psyches.

If you are a sibling who has experienced the death of a brother or sister at any age, recognize it, take it out of the closet, and talk about it with pride rather than shame or embarrassment. Also remember that your parents are changed forever and may still be falling apart inside; forgive them their shortcomings, for they are bereaved parents. Bring your sibling back to the dinner table; keep them in your life and in the conversation with your parents and your friends. Dead is not gone, and we do not have to let go; we do not get over loss, we learn to live with it, it is part of us. Knowing that, not only can we survive, we can thrive.

--By Mitch Carmody

Friends and Family...

Father's Day

I talked to my husband this week about Father's Day and how a father feels about the holiday and life in general after losing a child. From my husband's perspective this is the information I got:

The father feels responsible for their child's death regardless if they could have prevented it or not. As the head of the house, as the man of the house, as the protector of the family they often feel responsible for the loss of the child. They did not protect their child from harm (or illness, etc), somehow they should have been able to do so.

The father is the strong one in the family, made to keep his family safe and this can result in a lot of guilt or shame or pain if a death results.

The holiday is not one they really want to celebrate since the family isn't whole. It is not that they do not love their children that are remaining but during this holiday (and most) it becomes terribly obvious that the child is gone. It is very apparent to all of us in the family that DJ is not here to celebrate with his Dad.

What does a father want for Father's Day? He wants to hear about his child. Phone calls, conversations, notes, cards, memories about their child is the best gift. To hear something wonderful about their child that is gone, is the best gift of all. Do the father's ever ask for this? Of course not...do they wish everyone knew about this request? Absolutely!

So what are you going to give a bereaved father this weekend? A memory, a humorous story, a laugh, a cry? The mention of a father's child is the best gift of all!

-- Lisa – forever DJ's mom



Welcome...

Do What Is Best for You

When bereaved parents come to our meetings, we tell them "Do what is best for you." We stress this because the purpose of The Compassionate Friends is to help lighten your burden of grief – not make it heavier.

At our TCF meetings we share our common bond, the death of a child, in many different ways. Some by talking; others by listening. Some may take an active part in a program, others may watch,

and some may even leave the room. There are some who cry openly and some who are dry-eyed. We do not judge one another because even in the frame work of our likeness, we are so different. The circumstances and the stage of our grief determines what will or will not help us at a particular time.

Sharing may be too difficult for you at one meeting, but you may find it helps at another. There are some who continue to receive help by just listening. A program that helps one parent may have the opposite effect on another. Either way, it's OK! You soon learn that you are with a group who understands your pain – and cares.

We, as TCF leaders, offer ourselves to you as bereaved parents, not professionals. We do not have any set guidelines, and we do not tell you how to grieve. We will try to help you through your grief by offering you hope, hope that comes from knowing that others have been where you are and survived! Take from us only that which will help you. Do what is best for you.

--Adele Shearer, TCF, Augusta, GA

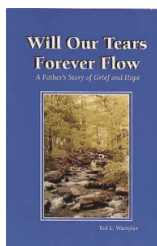
Helpful Hint...



Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your heart when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

--Helen Steiner

Book in Review...



Will Our Tears Forever Flow

A Father's Story of Grief and Hope by Ted L. Wampler. The sudden, violent death of Mary Lee Wampler Hitch shattered the lives of her family. Mary Lee (wife, mother, daughter, sibling, teacher, and so much more) was killed

when she lost control of her car on a rainy fall evening in 1995. The author of *Will Our Tears Forever Flow* and Mary Lee's father, Ted Wampler, takes us through his agonizing journey of

grief—shock, denial, confusion, anger, guilt, depression, turning point and restoration. This story is so powerful because the honesty, emotion, and healing process is laid bare in straight, well-written, plain talk. *Will Our Tears Forever Flow* will help anyone, in the midst of grief, understand and come to grips with their feelings. It will also help all of us understand that grief is just around the corner—a phone call away from changing our lives forever.

“We did not have any choice in what happened to us, but we do have a choice in how we use the experience”

-- Ted L. Wampler

Summer Breezes

There's a hint of laughter
Wafting past the porch.
For a moment I pause ...
To listen
In the warmth of the summer sun.
Memories to bask in,
Trees you climbed, kites you flew,
Bikes you raced, waves you splashed in.
At night we wrapped time around us
As we gazed toward the heavens.
The stars were full of wonder then,
And lazy days seemed endless.
Life spread before you,
Laughter filling the wind with happiness.
Just now I thought I heard you once again.
How pleasant this breath of summer,
The breezes hold such memories.

Of life. Of you.

--K. Nelson



A Dad Hurts Too

People don't always see the tears a dad cries.
His heart is broken too, when his child dies.
He tries to hold it together, and be strong,
even though his world's gone wrong.
He holds his wife as her tears fall
comforts her through it all.
He goes through his day doing what he's supposed
to do,
but a piece of his heart has been ripped away too.
So when he's alone, he lets out his pain,
and his tears come like falling rain.
His world has crashed in around him,
And a world that was once bright has gone dim.

He feels he has to be strong for others,
but dads hurt too, not just the mothers.
He searches for answers, but none are to be found.
He hides behind a mask when he is feeling down.
He smiles through his tears.
He struggles and holds in his fears.
But what you see on the outside is not always real.
Men don't always show how they really feel.
So I'd like to ask a favor of you:
The next time you see a mother
hurting over the loss of her child,
PLEASE REMEMBER:
A dad hurts too!
--Judi Walker

Stepparents

Stepfathers are a rare breed
They are called upon to do the tough deeds
Saying “no” to the children when mom wants to
stay clean
Leaving you as the bad guy and also called mean.
No one stops to think of the love you have for the
child
It's been going unnoticed for a long while
It's time we speak up and let others know
The children are also ours and we love them so.
In rough times moms reply “This is my child”
We don't retaliate because that's not our style
Yes, Mom, you gave them life, it's true
But we stepfathers gave our lives to them and to
you.
Please remember biological does not mean love
It's the gift of yourself spreading your wings like a
dove
Protecting and nourishing the ones you love dear
While comforting their hearts and eliminating their
fears.
Just remember we are grieving too
Maybe as much as you, yes it's true
Your tears may seem to come more frequently
But ours come mostly in secrecy.
This is because we are grieving for two
Our child and yes a life anew
We have lost our wives and the life we once knew
It's unbelievable but unfortunately very true.
Just remember we love like you do
Deep in our hearts and souls through and through
There is no “step” in a father's love
We are the guys God sent from above.
--The Staten Island Stepfathers By Wayne Bell, in
memory their daughter Karen Reilly



Our Children Remembered



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

Kelly Swan Cleary
Born: 3/59 Died: 3/95
Parents: Dick & Bev Swan

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesse Eric Esphorst
Born: 9/00 Died: 3/17
Parents: Jesse & Julie Esphorst

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Michael N. Daffin
Born: 2/85 Died: 4/17
Parents: Michael & Diana Daffin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scott Vincent Buehler
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/2008
Mother: Elizabeth Buehler Miller

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

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

Frank Christopher Castania
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania
Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

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

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

Vanessa Roseann Castania
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania
Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

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

Jennifer Nicole Hower
Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04
Brother: Jeff Hower

John Francis Cleary
Born: 12/74 Died: 8/93
Mother: Pauline Cleary Basil

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

Rachel Suzanne Hoyt
Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95
Sister: Laura Hoyt D'anna

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kirk Mc Nulty
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14
Mother: Elaine Mc Nulty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trevor Mitchell Nicholson
Born: 7/99 Died: 1/18
Parents: Brad & Kendra Nicholson

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rennie S. Wible
Born: 8/66 Died: 1/18
Mother: Jinx Wible

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

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

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

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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

Michael Jordan Zareski
Born: 5/71 Died: 12/17
Parents: Susan & Norm Zareski

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:
Emily Kass
June 1995 - March 2006**



Happy Birthday Sweetie Pie!
Forever 10 3/4 when you should be turning 23....23 years old! It is unbelievable to me that so much time has passed when I still feel as if you're about to run in the door full of happy energy, spirit, and amazing stories. We miss you constantly, yet feel your presence. The March4Marrow this past weekend had a sea of 20 purple hats...Muriel remembered one of the adventures you two had at the Natural History Museum when you were both probably close to 4 years old...a curator was trying to ask you a question (and giving you all sorts of hints), but the two of you were giggling so much the answer took forever to get out... something about

an elephant's ear...
Happy Birthday Emily
You are missed
You are loved
Forever & Always,
Mom & Jessica

**For Siblings...**

Camp Comfort Zone - Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (310) 483-8313. **Visit their website and see how this wonderful camp experience will benefit siblings! There limited openings left.**

Graduation

I was driving down the road the other day, thinking of how the retail market makes any event an opportunity for revenue. Graduation seems to fall into that category, with cards and gifts for every Graduate. This time of year reminds me that my graduation from high school was a bittersweet time. Really, it was the first time I had "surpassed" my older brother, David, in anything significant. I turned the age that he was when he died, 18, in the beginning of my senior year of high school. That year was difficult for me, as I felt that I was getting to move past where he had been cut short. Graduation day was no exception. I was happy to be getting out of high school, and looking forward to that coming August when I would go to college. But why was I getting to do these things, and not David? What made me so special that I got to stay here and experience these things? I still am not quite sure of the answer to those questions.

Graduation from high school was really just the first of many events which I have gotten to experience that David never will. College graduation, my wedding, and the birth of my two children are examples. And for me, each event has been a bit bittersweet.

The good news is this: that while time does make it easier to bear day-to-day activities without your sibling, each major event in your life presents itself as a new opportunity to remember your brother or sister, as well. For me, figuring that out was a huge relief, as it meant that my fear of forgetting David was not something I needed to worry about any more. His memory is just as alive for me today, 15-1/2 years later, as it was when I took that walk across the stage to accept my high school diploma.

--Amy Baker

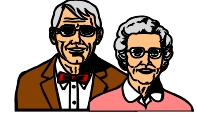
TCF, Longwood, FL

Ask Dr. Paulson Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

Q. I am 35 years old and my only brother passed away this past May at age 27. It was a sudden death—he wasn't physically sick—he was found by my mom in his room on the floor. I haven't had any bereavement counseling for the loss of my brother, but I have been reading lots of books. I have lost others close to me — grandparents, friends—but the loss of my brother has just crushed my whole world. I have good days when I can talk about him without breaking down, but on other days I think of him and can't control my tears. The loss of my brother was very devastating to all of us, my parents as well as me. Since I'm the oldest and now the only child, I feel it is my duty to take care of my parents, and if I don't, then I'm a bad daughter. However, I've been scolded by my best friend that I need to take care of myself as well. How do I continue to do that without feeling selfish and disloyal to my parents or my brother?

A. Once tragedy strikes, the family unit begins to function differently. Although you have always been the oldest child, your world has now made a big shift to being an only child. Your tears demonstrate the depth of relationship you shared with your brother, and that relationship doesn't end. As time passes, you'll notice you have more "good days," when you think of the good times and smile at your memories. You can't share the day-to-day experiences with him, but he will always be your brother. You will always be the person who grew up as his older sister—the person you became by knowing him, caring for him, playing with him, and loving him; That doesn't ever stop or end. You are not being disloyal to him for having good days. I believe he would still want you to have as much comfort, joy, and laughter in your life as possible—even though he cannot be the source now. Part of caring for yourself is allowing yourself to experience the good days as well as those days when you realize how much you miss him. At the same time, it sounds like you have a desire to share time with your parents too. This doesn't mean you need to become responsible for their moods or emotional well-being. Instead, take the opportunity to share yourself, your love, and your family connections with your parents. Establish a new, stronger, more supportive, and loving

relationship with the family that has loved you and grown with you through all the ups and downs thus far in your life.



For Grandparents...

Father's Day: A Grandfather's View

Now well into my fifties, and knowing Father's Day is approaching once again, I find myself recalling my very first. It was a beautiful Sunday morning, June '76, when I became a father for the first time - a Father's Day I will never forget. Already prepared with the traditional cigars, I had to be a turkey, strutting his stuff. Many of the Father's Days after that were spent away from home working, and never stopping to think just how special this I day really is.

After my retirement, a few years back, I became a grandfather, and my whole life changed. I never dreamed I would be changing diapers, giving bottles, in the middle of the floor playing dolls, or outside watching bugs, birds, butterflies, bees, squirrels, rabbits - and loving every minute of it - with the most beautiful granddaughter anyone has ever seen (my opinion, of course).

That was a special year for me. I found myself asking the wife, "Did our kids do that?" many times, and she telling me, "Yes, but you were working or just didn't notice." My granddaughter taught me more about the beauty of life and how much I had missed in the short time she was here than I could ever have imagined! We lost her at 13 months, 2 days, and 22 hours due to a very rare genetic disorder. And again my life changed.

This Father's Day will be spent with my family and a new grandson, now two and a half years old, and a great little guy. I see much of the same inquisitive nature in him. Making sure each visit he has is a good time, I think I do it out of obligation and not with the joy I once had. But when you see that smile on his face, you know you made his day a little I better, and that makes it all worthwhile. Memories are a part of our past, and some become a part of our heart. At the end of Father's Day, when everyone has gone to bed, I will sit at my desk, drink one more cup of coffee, say a prayer, and, once again, tell my granddaughter just how much I love and miss her. And somehow I know she knows. In my mind I'll hear her say, "Pa Paw, I love you too. Take time to smell the roses."

--Bill Fausett BPUSA, Central Arkansas Chapter

From Our Members...



TCF National Conference

The following articles address the upcoming National Conference. I can't stress enough how beneficial it was to my family after Eric's death. The workshops had something for everyone in our family during each time slot. Some parts were intense but when I was overwhelmed I was able to sit in the meditation room and regain my balance. Even if something was discussed that didn't apply to where I was in my grief journey, I followed instructions and tucked it away in the back of my mind. Later, when it did apply it was so helpful to know how others wrestled with the same problem. Looking back I can say with certainty that I feel that I did a years worth of healing in one weekend. I learned so much at each conference. It was the best "gift" that I gave myself in my grief...
 –Lynn Vines

The TCF National Conference is being held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand from July 27-29th. The theme is the "Gateway to Hope and Healing." This will be the 19th National Conference that I have attended, with the first one in 1999 in Portland, OR. It has meant so much to me to have been able to go to that many. I promised myself that if I was able, I would do everything I could to attend each one. I always felt that it was my special time with Nina, and then with Chris when he also died.

You meet people from all over the USA - our common denominator is unfortunately that we have lost a precious child or grandchild or sibling. And though we are all from many walks of life, ethnicities, beliefs, and areas of the country, we all have the loss of a beloved one that binds us. We wear our photo buttons and people do not turn away when we cry - they ask us about our loved ones and they really want to know. I have people I consider dear friends who I only see one time a year at the conference and we pick up where we have left off as if time stood still. I've heard amazing keynote speakers and workshop presenters. And being at the Saturday Night banquet and candle lighting with 1000+ people holding their lit candles high in honor of their kids, grandkids, brothers and sisters is a sight like no other!

The conference concludes on Sunday morning with the annual Walk to Remember. It truly is something that you won't want to miss. I believe, if at all possible, everyone should be able to attend one in their lifetime. The next four will be Philadelphia, Atlanta, Detroit and then Houston

consecutively. For more information go online to compassionatefriend.org

~Excerpts from the article by Cathy Seehuetter, Chapter Leader/Newsletter Editor St. Paul TCF

The Compassionate Friends National Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.—from the TCF national office's website.

The South Bay/LA Chapter is offering first time attendee scholarships to help offset costs. Each year, our chapter makes scholarships available to help our members attend a national conference. The scholarships will go to those who have never attended a TCF National Conference. We will pay the registration fee, Friday night luncheon, Saturday night banquet/candle lighting, and Walk to Remember fees (\$240). If you are interested in receiving a scholarship let us know ASAP as scholarships are limited and conference and hotel reservations need to be made. Call (310) 963-4646.

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.



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.



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: June 1st for July 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 co-leader).....(310) 370-1645
- Mary Sankus (chapter co-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

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.

Our Website... Joe Zelik is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get you newsletter online. 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 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. You can also e-mail Lynn at Lynntcf@aol.com If you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

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.

Local Support Groups...

- 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.
- 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 - Year round 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
survivorsofselfharm.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)	

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

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



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik	Marilyn Nemeth
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Ken Konopasek
Kitty Edler	Susan Kass
Mary Sankus	Crystal Henning
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	

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. We encourage everyone use the valuable information it holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at compassionatefriends.org. and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

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. 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*

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.

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 Joseph Emilio Licciardone, April 1994 - March 2016. It has been three years and one month since you went to Heaven. We all miss you so much! Thank you Joseph for sending my butterflies and for watching over all of us, including your nieces and nephews, Aiden, Andrew, Sophia, Julia, Ethan, and Jayde. Until we meet again,
Love mom, Dad, and Vincent

In loving memory of our Granddaughter, Daniel Mosher, August 1978 - June 1997.
Love, Grandma Nelson

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 _____

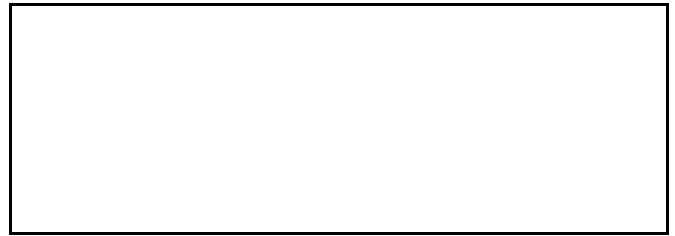
To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month or it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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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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