



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

SEPTEMBER 2018 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be Sept. 6th, the first Thursday
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. → Go to the WEST parking lot. Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

--Please remember to park in the West church parking lot and not on the street or East lot.--

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 Sept. 6th meeting will start with "Grief vs. Time... Taking the time to do our grief work.."

* Please remember, we must park in the WEST parking lot instead of the previous one.

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 Sept. 6th meeting will start with “Grief vs. Time... Taking the time to do our grief work.” Grieving takes time. First we are in shock over the loss of our child. We can barely function. Time seems unimportant. We can’t stand the thought of having to live life without our loved one. Time seems to stretch out forever with no hope of the pain lessening or life becoming normal again. A lot of what we do in our grief takes time. We know that it will be long and arduous and sometimes we instinctively know that the recovery will take a lifetime. But with time and actually embracing the grief work, we learn how to function again with grief residing within us. And as surprising as it may seem, time will become something to look forward to again. Join us as we share what we have learned about taking the time to do our grief work.



Living With Your Grief...

Many griever report maintaining an active connection with their deceased loved ones' by talking to them, dreaming about them, sensing their presence or feeling watched over and protected by them. Regardless of what some will tell you...It is normal and healthy to foster these continuing bonds, as you decide how your loved one will be remembered, memorialized and included in your family and community life.

Time does NOT heal grief... Time is neutral. It is not the passage of time alone that heals. It is what you do with time that matters. Now that this death has happened to you, you must decide what you can do with your grief.

Grieving is an active process, not a passive one, and recovery is a choice. Coping with grief involves many courses of action, especially as you find your way through the first year of grief, you will learn how to use this grieving time to help you heal yourself. There is no right or wrong way to do the work of grieving. There is only your way, and you must discover it for yourself. Two people sharing the same loss (e.g. the parents of a child) can experience very different grief emotions, unfortunately this can lead to misunderstandings. There is no magic formula, no short cut, and no easy way out.

--by Mark R Simpson, extracted from www.livingwithgrief

Some Things You Need To Know

Grief waits:

- If you put it away and try to ignore it, it will simply wait until you have no choice but to experience it.
- We grieve as intensely as we love.
- There is no “normal” in grieving.
- You will never be the same person you were before your loss.
- You must make a conscious decision to “get better.”
- There are no set-in-concrete stages or time lines in grief.
- Other people will not understand your grief unless you share it.
- It is okay to talk about your loved one as long as you want.
- It is okay to keep their belongings as long as you want.
- It is okay to include them in celebrations and special occasions for as long as you want.
- “Finding closure” is not a requirement of healing. For many, it is not even an option. Even in death— love remains.

--author unknown TCF Queensland Australia

When Grief Returns

Grief is a tricky thing. It can wreak havoc on your emotions, especially in the first year following the death of a child. A parent can think that progress in healing is finally being made, and then something as unexpected as a song comes on the radio, and the words trigger feelings of grief as strong as if the loss took place yesterday.

After all of the “firsts” are in the past, the path to healing seems a bit more even for a while. Setbacks don’t come nearly as often as in the first year, and rarely are the grief feelings as raw and intense as during the first months following the death of a child. Most parents work their way through the sad emotions of loss to a place where they can finally recall fond memories of times spent with their child. They can talk about their child without crying, and there is an overall feeling of peace rather than the gnawing feeling of never being at rest.

Grief can be quite deceitful, though, and show up many years after a loss leaving one feeling like healing never took place. Rather than be alarmed if grief returns, remind yourself often that grief’s visit is only a momentary appearance. Just as we

go through seasons in our lives, grief will visit each of those seasons to let us know that the loss of a child has left its mark on the heart. An especially sensitive time is when a parent enters what we so often call the "empty nest." Grief can return as a bold reminder of what was so cruelly and unfairly taken away. A parent's emotions can become very disturbed during this sad reminder of loss once again.

When grief returns, remind yourself often that this is a normal part of the overall healing process. The pain associated with child loss never totally goes away, so it is quite normal for certain times in our life to bring grief emotions to the forefront once again.

Remember that this return of grief will not last forever. Take good care of yourself physically. Eat well-balanced meals. Rest. Keep yourself well hydrated. Talk to your doctor if you feel like you might be entering a phase of depression. Depression is something that can be treated early, and is nothing to try to hide.

Lastly, find some support for this difficult time in your life. Even though your loss might have occurred 20 years ago, if you feel overwhelmed with sadness and grief, it is most important that you find someone who will listen and lend you support. Remind yourself often that grief is something that cannot be ignored. Grief can be masked for a while, but eventually it makes its presence known. It is something that requires hard work and attention. A parent's grief is a natural reaction to an abnormal event. Grief is not an illness, but rather is a time of readjustment to a reality of living with loss.

Parents who lose a child do not stop grieving. The pain will vary in intensity at different times in a parent's life, but the process is lifelong. When grief returns, remember to be kind to yourself and allow yourself the time you need to once again work through your feelings.

-- Clara Hinton

"With each piece, the bereaved, through trial and error, find where each piece belongs or even if it belongs at all. This process is different for every person and does not adhere to any kind of time line. This (what feels like endless) thinking is the work that grief demands—it is the creation of a new picture of your life—created one piece at a time."

--Stephanie Elson

When Will This All Stop? *The End of Grieving*



Your grieving heart... How long does it take for grieving to end? As you read this, your loss may still be fresh, raw and excruciating. You may find it hard to believe you can ever recover or heal from this horrible thing. It will take a long time, there's no way around that. But we include here a brief description of what usually happens after your grieving is finished, so you can survive now, with hope in the back of your mind.

There are brighter days ahead. The grieving process is a very personal and individual thing. Your unique relationship with your loved one, and the manner in which they died will dictate the length and depth of your own "roller coaster ride".

As we have said several times, there is no healthy way to shorten the process; there are no short cuts to the resolution of grief. You must let it run its course. There is also no "normal" amount of time for mourning. Some people adjust to a new life in a matter of months. Others take years or longer to complete their grieving. The best length of time for you? Whatever you need.

Even after you are "done", you may experience grief feelings from time to time, especially during special dates and anniversaries, or during holidays. Expect it. The end of grief does not mean that you forget your beloved, or cease to love them. When you experience a tragic loss, it breaks your heart.

♥ Can you mend your broken heart? Yes.

♥ Does this mean that you are dishonoring your loved one? No.

♥ Will you ever forget them? No.

♥ Will they always have a place in your heart? Yes.

--TCF Queensland Australia

“How did I get to this place?”

One minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month at a time.

It is a slow journey from crawling through the pits of hell in deep grief to coming back to the reality of here and now.

It's as close to a near death experience as I can imagine."

--Annette Mennen Baldwin

Re-Entry Into Life

May of brilliant greens, harbinger of summer,
mother of daffodils and tulips, warm my soul in
your sun's glow!

I am in need of that warmth, ready again to feel
alive.

For so long I have shut out life,
unwilling to see beauty in a world without my child,
unable to feel joy or love or laughter,
longing only for him.

I cared for naught for life would have welcomed
death.

It has been a long climb, my re-entry into life.

In that climb I did not lose the pain of separation,
but rather I learned to assimilate it into my soul as
a part of my life.

I here...he there.

And so I chance life again, mindful of its brevity,
welcoming its brilliant colors,
the song of birds, the grace of love.

--L. Dolan, TCF Greenland, NH

Is It Easing?

I heard your name today and my heart did not
skip a beat, nor was my mind flooded with the
emotion of losing you. I heard your name today
and it did not bring back the terrible hurt feelings of
when you first left me. I heard your name today
with a calmness that surprised me. Many another
child carries your name, and it had been torture
hearing it and seeing the smiling faces on those
little girls.

But today I knew—I found out—what others in
my footsteps found out and tried to tell me. The
hurt will ease; but the memories, the love, the
good times will never go away.

-- Phoebe C. Redman ~ TCF, Bradenton, FL.

The Shirt In The Clothes Hamper

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

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



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

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

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

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

--Fay Harden TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

The End of Summer Blues

I always get a little sad when summer comes
to an end. I liked having my kids home during the
summer, to be able to sleep late, go swimming,
camping or boating whenever we had time. Some
years my kids, especially the girls, got excited
when August came. They would get new school
supplies and new clothes. They would have new
classrooms, new subjects and new teachers. I
usually felt a little lost and left out at the beginning
of the school year after I dropped them off at
school.

I like hot weather (I wasn't disappointed this
summer). In autumn, the weather is still warm, the
trees turn on their fireworks, and the fall flowers
are beautiful. However, fall is a predecessor to
bare trees and a flowerless landscape, to say
nothing of freezing weather and limited hours of
daylight. Also, in the summer there are fewer
commitments. People vacation, take weekend

trips and everything is just more laid back. Fall means gearing back up to all those things we let go during the summer.

Since our son Todd died, I feel even sadder when autumn hits. I see the kids walking and biking or being bussed to school and miss getting my kids ready. Fall sports, beginning meetings for Sunday school, Boy and Girl Scouts are all reminders that my son has died and my daughters are grown.

Fall is the start of the dying process, a process that those of us who have lost children are much too familiar with. I know spring will follow winter and the earth will come alive again, but for now I have the end of summer blues.

--Barb Seth, Editor TCF/Madison, WI Chapter

A Death Has Occurred

A death has occurred,
and everything is changed by this event.
We are painfully aware that life
can never be the same,
that yesterday is over,
that relationships once rich have ended.
But there is another way to look upon this truth.
If life went on the same without the presence
of the one who died,
we could only conclude that the life we here
remember made no contribution, filled no space,
meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place
that cannot be filled
is a high tribute to this individual.

Life can be the same
after a trinket has been lost,
but never the same
after the loss of a treasure.

--Paul Iron TCF Savannah, GA

Healing With Humor

Laughter is not a part of everybody's life, so it is easy to accidentally offend someone with humor. Bereaved parents, especially the newly bereaved, do not feel like laughing; their joy in life has gone. Laughing seems so trivial to them they can easily be offended.

Some bereaved parents feel guilty about humor and laughter. They feel they have no right to joy because their child is dead. Appearing joyous can bring condemnation from society, not

to mention your spouse, for appearing to not care. People may think, surely if you are laughing you did not love your child as much as I love mine.

The truth is, joy makes life better. Joyous talk and laughter do not show disrespect, they show that healing is taking place. If you laughed with your child while they lived, it is OK to someday laugh with your child again. Your dear child has never left your heart and their spirit would surely rather fill your heart with joy than sorrow.

--Chuck Prestwood

When A Child Is Murdered...

As a veteran hospice nurse and mother of 2 deceased children, I found myself feeling at ease in the arena of bereavement. To be honest, I may have even felt confident with the subject matter: the universality of how the bereft feel, the roller-coaster emotions, anniversary bursts, the comments meant to comfort that instead feel dismissive.

Mother's Day was right around the corner. How prideful I was! Recently we learned that our grandson Michael had been shot and killed the night before. We rushed to the city and joined our daughter's family through a most surreal week. And immediately we learned painfully that the manner of death does impact the process.

When each of our children died "of natural causes" we were immediately cocooned in the arms of a community and their great works of love. Cards, visits, casseroles - all the very southern expressions of helping people mourn, poured out. We discovered that a homicide is terribly isolating to a family. There were few of those acts of mercy to sustain us. In fact, the silence was deafening.

Two weeks following Michael's murder, our own son Michael was married; his brother was confirmed; we completed a week-long visit of a daughter and her 3 children; and I underwent GYN surgery. The silence now roared.

What is at work here? Is it that a death caused by an illness or accident seems less contagious, less direct, less threatening than a homicide? Is a murder so personal and so heinous that it causes such a deep aversion to ordinarily very compassionate people?

In addition to the normal death tasks are added a new, terrible language: crime scene, homicide detectives, crime lab, personal effects, swabbed for DNA, gag.



Blessings on the courageous soul who, despite the discomfort of a "murder" had a card waiting for us at Week One. Blessings on the sweet doctor at work who called me back for a hug in the hall. And blessings on The Compassionate Friends who sent 2 most appreciated cards.

I have again been a student of this subject called Death. I have learned that a death executed brings unique suffering, and offers unique opportunities to serve. One of the detectives put it so tenderly: "Our shoulders are broad. Let us carry that for you." We gratefully accept.

--Gerry and Vic Gray Lewis TCF, Jackson, MS

Memories of School Starting



The time has come to send my 14 yr. old son, Kevin, off to high school. To most parents this would be done with a few tears and an understanding that this is another letting go phase on the road to adulthood.

To me, however, it has been a week filled with "lots" of tears, anxiety, worry, fear..... well, you get the picture. The memories of sending another son off to high school 10 years ago only to have him die by suicide 3 months into the school year have been overwhelming and I was completely caught off guard from the onslaught. My sensitive, yet strong son, Robert, lover of the ocean, was overwhelmed 10 years ago and completely caught off guard also at this major life change....well, you get the picture here too.

My consolation and comfort is that Kevin is strong both emotionally and spiritually and very ready for this next step in his life. I cannot let Robert's experience influence the success I feel awaits his brother.

Kevin and I are both "well seasoned" by life experiences that have grown us both and hopefully equipped us both for the journeys ahead. For those parents who are experiencing the anticipation of school starting back, whether it's memories of past school years or sending one off to school, my prayers are with you.

My son Robert, loved the ocean and had the opportunity to swim in both the Atlantic and Pacific and shores in between. His ashes were scattered off the coast of NC, his favorite beach and I visit often bringing him flowers. I too love the ocean

and thank God for creating such a vast body of water that represents both our anger and our peace and every emotion in between.

--Barbara Parsons Lawrenceville, GA TCF

I'm Going To Tell You Something

I'm going to tell you something,
I hope you'll never have to know.
I'll tell you how a heart can break
and tears can constant flow.

I lost my baby girl you see
an angel in my eyes
The lord reached right down, took her hand
and led her to the skies.

Please don't ever tell me,
that time will heal my pain
because not even time,
will bring her back again.

Please do not forget my child,
she was a person too,
forever she will live,
inside of me and you.

Just tell me that's she's happy,
in that land way up above,
she's snuggled in an angels wings
wrapped in mummy & daddy's love .
--author unknown

Newly Bereaved...

Masks

In idle conversation, you ask me about my children. You are an acquaintance. I do not know you well, and so I don a mask. I speak happily of joys, light heartedly of mischief, but I do not speak of death. I do not want to see the shadow of uncertainty pass over your face and feel the awkward silence that falls like a curtain between us.

I do not want to say, "It's OK; that was a long time ago." It will never be quite "okay," and sometimes it seems as if it happened yesterday. And so I take my mask along with me through life like a perpetual Halloween night, to hide just a bit from people and to preserve my strength. For mourning is tiring, and each time I recount that day

of death, I am a little wearied. I would rather speak of the joys in his life than the sorrows of his death to strangers who absently ask of children.

Yet tragedy is more universal than I had ever known before it touched my life. And so many times I wonder who else looks out from behind a mask.

--Karen Nelson, TCF/Columbia, MO

Seasoned Grievors...



PREFACE: I wrote this message on a social media site that was intended to give those around me, the non-bereaved, an insight into my world and how I continue to function and live my life. Six years ago to the day [written on July 3, 2012], unbeknownst to me, my life would forever be changed. My direction, my plans, my future, everything I had hoped and prayed for, it was all altered and never to be the same. My first born son, the child who gave me strength to walk away from a situation that I couldn't bare to do on my own, the child who filled a space in my heart that I never knew could be filled, the child who turned my adolescence into maturity at what I now realize was such a young age, the child who gave my life absolute purpose and meaning...that same child that my world revolved around from the day that I knew he lived inside of me...that child was taken from me so quickly and without warning that the shock that took over my life the following months is the only way that I was able to preserve what's left of me today.

Many say that they could never go forward with their lives if they were in my shoes....but you would. Just as I did. Because you have no choice. As much as my world completely stopped, I watched from within my cocoon how the world outside kept moving without any mind to the pain that I was going through. I remember very vividly, the first time I stepped into a normal establishment (as opposed to funeral homes and cemeteries) - I sat down to eat and just stared at everyone bustling and chattering around me...how ignorant (to no fault of their own) they were to the pain I had in my entire body, to the experiences I was going through, to the fact that I had just left a funeral home to discuss arrangements and payments for my son's last farewell and was now thinking of what clothing I wanted to bury my 2-

year- old child in.

How unimportant everything else outside of clinging to what little sanity I had left was. The shock, the numbness, the inability to finish a thought, the constant cloud of fog that I was continuously walking through...over time it would fade a little more. Before I knew it, I was learning how to let the memories of that day come, consume me, and then let them go again...and eventually I learned how to quiet the memories and push them away before they took over my functions.

Trust me, the thought of lying down next to my son in his coffin and letting them pour the dirt over me was a constant thought in my head at all times...anything had to be better than what I was going through...but somehow, as those of us who are bereaved parents know, we keep going...on autopilot for the most part, but we're going none the less.

This year, I want to focus on the new life that grew from the ashes that my old life became. When Avery died, I remember always telling myself that if I had to go on living without him, then I was going to make it worthwhile. There had to be a purpose as to why God would bless me with such an absolute angel, both in life and in his death, only to take him away 2 short years later. I didn't know at the time what that purpose was... but over the years I think it has started to be a little more clear.

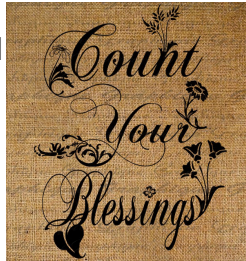
Two of the most valuable lessons I've learned are: - At the end of the day, nothing is more important than the people and the relationships in your life. Money comes and goes, jobs and careers can change and fade, material possessions can break or be lost...if you had every single ounce of your life stripped from you, the only thing you would have remaining are your memories and your dignity. I have decided to build a life full of rich memories, compassion, respect, generosity, kindness, open-mindedness, and love.

- Live life so as to have no regrets. There were so many things I would constantly say "Later" to, or "Another time." I thought I had a lifetime to do everything. From small things like playing a game with Avery to larger things like the vacations we kept saying we'd take. I was always preoccupied with other things - work, making money, saving money, "my time", everything I didn't have instead of what I did have...my list of

regrets is so long, I stopped counting and had to learn to just accept them and move forward. But I learned from my mistakes, and whenever I make a decision - small or big - I run through the list of possible regrets based on each choice. If the regrets are something I can live with if my world crumbled the next day, then I go forward with it...but if the regrets would be consuming should tomorrow not come the way I hoped it would, then I rethink my options and do all I can to make it happen. The guilt one can feel from all of their regrets is enough to disable a person if they don't learn how to accept it. It's a powerful emotion.

By fully embracing these two life lessons and living my life according to them, I have watched myself transform over the years...into a better person, at least through my eyes. Based on the numerous messages I continue to receive from people, both strangers and friends, the purpose for Avery's passing and for my continued existence has become more clear: God blessed me with a child that touched many lives while he was present on this earth. And through the words that God gives me, I am able to extend his life after his death to reach many others around me so that they can understand the importance of "counting their blessings" while they still have them. In this day and age, so many of us are consumed with better, faster, and newer...we forget to slow down and enjoy what we already have, not realizing that tomorrow it could all be gone.

When I woke up on the morning of July 3, 2006 and began my day, the thought of going to bed that night without my child in my life anymore never once crossed my mind. Had it, I would have kissed him a hundred more times, held him till the very last minute, and crammed as many memories with him into that day as I possibly could. I don't believe in my heart that I could have changed the outcome of the day had I known any differently...I believe that it was his time and that his purpose here on earth was served and that no matter what I did, he was going to leave one way or another...but I do believe that had I known, I would have treasured every single minute with him much differently. And that is the lesson Avery blessed me with so that I could live my life better today, with Caydan [my younger son] and with the rest of those around me. Living each day as if tomorrow may never come.



And that is the gift that I hope everyone around me can take from Avery as well without having to walk in my shoes. Learning to live a fulfilled life with the means around you is one of the purposes I believe Avery's life had, and I am here to keep his memories and lessons alive and to spread them to those willing and open to hearing them. His life and death were not in vain, my continued existence here and the pain I feel is not without purpose. Avery lives on in me, in Caydan, in the way I live my life, and in every person that has been touched in some way by his memories.

Avery - I miss you more than words can relay, but I know that you feel it in my heart, and I know that you continue to walk by my side as I can feel you at times when I need you there. For such a small little guy, you sure have caused a lot of ripples in this world. A lot of tears too, but we know that you're in good hands and that you're being taken care of and happy. We love you here on earth, and will find you when our time comes to join you.

Sleep well, my angel. Not a minute goes by where you aren't in my thoughts and my heart. I love you Boo-Boo.

--Crystal Henning, Mother to Avery James Lent
TCF South Bay/L.A. CA Chapter

"My tears are not a sign of weakness or a lack of hope or faith. They are symbols of the depth of my loss and, I am told, a sign that I am recovering."

--Marcia Davis

For Friends and Family...

Forgive Me

There's a hole where my heart used to be.

When I smile at you and say I'm okay,

Forgive me.

I know you want to help me but I turn you away,

Forgive me.

I show no interest, nor do I seem to care.

Forgive me.

For there's an emptiness now where my heart used to be.

--Alannah McGregor, TCF Victoria, AU

If you mention my child's name I may cry.

But if you don't mention it,
you will break my heart.

--author unknown

Welcome...

Attending your first meeting takes courage. As fellow bereaved parents, we're sorry for your loss, yet glad you found us. The Compassionate Friends (TCF) meetings are a safe place to express your pain and confusion. We can share the doubts and the fears that come with losing a child because we understand the depths of the pain you are now experiencing. Everyone grieves differently but we share many of the same feelings you are having. While we cannot fix it for you, we can share what helped us when our own children died. We can offer our friendship, compassion, support, and hope as you process your loss. As fellow travelers, we understand the depth of your pain and we encourage you to come and see for yourself how helpful TCF can be. Each meeting is different, so we do ask that you attend three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you.

Helpful Hint...**Healing**

Sometimes you have to take it on blind faith that your heart is healing. It may not feel like the pain is going away. You might still cry just as hard as ever. But strength, confidence, and wisdom grow invisibly and you must trust that it is there.
--Stephanie St. Claire, TCF Valley of the Sun

Book Review ...

***Transcending Loss*, By Ashley Davis Prend, A.C.S.W. An inspiring new approach to the lifelong process of grieving.** The author asserts that death doesn't end the relationship, it simply forges a new type of relationship – one based not on physical presence but on memory, spirit, and love. A licensed psychotherapist and bereavement support specialist helps grievers deal with the ongoing impact of their loss – and the attempt to transcend it.

This is a book about death and grief, yes, but more importantly it is a book about love and hope. I have learned from [my interviews with] courageous people about pain, struggle, resiliency, and meaning. Their stories show that over time, you can learn to transcend even in spite of pain. We all get broken by life sooner or later

because loss is the price we pay for living and loving. But experience shows that we can become stronger at the broken places and find the opportunity in crisis. I hope this book will help you move beyond grief and will guide you on your journey through time of healing and transcendence." – *From the introduction.*

Then and Now

They were my children, then.
Resounding voices, arguments and laughter -
Intense and wide awake at storytime -
In love with music, dance and birthday parties -
So serious about their great inventions -
So filled with promise, all-involved with life.
My children, then.

They are my children, now.
Remembered like a touching of the wind -
Remembered in the clarity of mornings -
Remembered in the smiles of other children -
Remembered like the charm of cradlesongs -
Alive in silence and in absence, present.
My children, now.
~ Sasha Wagner from her book *Wintersun*

A Little Farther Down the Road

I know those tears you're crying
I've been there in your shoes
You feel like there's no use trying
Like there's nothing left to lose.
You take one small step forward
Then move two steps back
You may not see it now
But it won't always be like that.

A little farther down the road
You'll see the sun again.
A little farther down the road
You'll look back at where you've been.
You'll see how far you've come since then
It's a well used road I know
A little farther down the road
The strength will come to go.
--Author unknown

"It was your child who died. This is your pain, and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way—and may a bit more healing take place in the doing." --Peggy G. Tyler TX newsletter

Valley of the Butterflies

There is a green, sun-drenched valley-
 Light with the scent of clover and lilacs-
 Where the butterflies dance.
 Leaping and swooping, they reflect colors
 Of every hue and dimension.
 There are monarchs and skippers,
 Swallowtails and delicate spring azures.
 Each dances its unique pattern
 Of flits, circles, and dives,
 Stretching its fragile wings toward the clouds
 Or brushing its feet on the succulent grass.
 There are no roads, paths, or gates
 To broach the valley's entrance,
 Yet it is visited often in thoughts and dreams.
 Every parent who has sent forth a child
 And vainly waited for its return
 Comes seeking in the valley of the butterflies,
 And there finds a beautiful spirit,
 Stretching its wings to the clouds and brushing
 its feet on the grass,
 Dancing in swoops, flits, and dives,
 Drying its dewy wings in the warm sunshine of
 forever.

-Marcia F. Alig TCF Mercer Area NJ

I Remember

I remember your first cry when you entered this
 world
 I remember your first steps when you were
 learning to explore
 I remember your first words when you wanted to
 be heard
 I remember your first day of school when it was
 time for you to learn
 I remember your first fish when you found
 something you loved
 I remember your first ball game when you wanted
 to have fun
 I remember your first bike when you rode on two
 wheels
 I remember your first date when you found out
 about girls
 I remember all your firsts like it was just yesterday
 Even though now, you have since gone away
 I think of our trips, the things that we've done
 I am so thankful now, for every single one
 I remember so much we've done through the
 years
 It's all I have left of you now, the memories and

tears

So although there are no new firsts you can make
 anymore
 I will cherish our past and carry them with me
 forevermore
 You will always be with me right here in my heart
 As you always have been, right from the start.
*--In memory of Brian M. Wood and James A Wood
 Written by R. Barry Wood, father of Brian and
 brother of James*

Pictures on a Mantle



As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see
 Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.
 I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,
 Make a wish that can never be.
 Here's your picture as an infant, sitting on my knee
 Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be
 First trip on the bus, your first day of school
 All the new friends you met.
 Your first dog, first trip to the beach
 How much better could it get?
 There's your soccer team, your baseball team
 Oh the pride you made me feel
 A bases clearing triple to end the game
 Could this be for real?
 Out of grade school, on to high school
 Your innocence almost gone
 Your first car, your first prom
 A young man you've become
 A bumpy road in high school
 Trouble we couldn't see
 Lots of jobs, two years of college
 An Associate's Degree.
 At last, you were close to being
 The person you wanted to be.
 When you left that fateful night
 You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."
 How could I have ever known
 That I would never see you again?
 I know you're out there somewhere
 In a place we cannot see
 Your picture on God's mantle now
 Smiling down at me.

-- Tom Murphy TCF Greater Cincinnati, OH

When one door of happiness closes, another
 opens, but often we look so long at the closed
 door that we do not see the one which has opened
 for us.

-- Alexander Graham Bell



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

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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Blair Chapin
Born: 4/82 Died: 5/18
Sister: Elizabeth Chapin

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

Connor Aslay
Born: 5/99 Died: 7/18
Mother: Erin Aslay

Michael Edward Clapp
Born: 2/93 Died: 4/18
Mother: Patti Clapp

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tiffany Lamb Corkins
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/05
Mother: Nancy Lamb

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Larry Broks Jr.
Born: 7/88 Died: 9/17
Mother: Thessia Carpenter

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

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

Scott Vincent Buehler
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/08
Mother: Elizabeth Buehler Miller

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sarah Jade Hurley
Born: 6/97 Died: 5/17
Father: Tim Hurley
Grandmother: Laurie Hurley

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

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

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

Alberto Lopez
Born: 8/66 Died: 2/18
Mother: Albertina Lopez

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

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

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

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

Douglas Drennen Kay
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06
Parents: Diane & Steve Kay

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

Christopher Metsker
Born: 1/82 Died: 3/18
Parents: Justin & Tara Metsker

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Donnie Vincent Puliselich
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/08
Mother: Maria Puliselich
Sister: Michelle Pulislich

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

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

Shannon Quigley
Born: 12/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen Shortridge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...

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

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

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

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: Cherese Mari Lauhere 9/74 - 2/96

Our Dear Cherese,



Another birthday has passed by, another year, but you are forever 21 years old... you never age, you never got to finish college at UCLA, you never got married and had the children you

always dreamed about and being a mom and we never got to have all this with you either

Cherese, you gave us so much love and joy, we have always been so proud of you in everything you ever did You cared about people and their feelings, you were compassionate and devoted to our family and all your friends you love so dearly. We love and miss you more than I can express into words, there are no words, just a broken heart that never heals

I still wish I could trade places with you and you could be living out your dreams but since I can't, we all continue to keep your memory alive with your foundation to help children and you have been doing that since 1996 Cherese Mari Lauhere Foundation www.cherese.org You have already helped thousands of children. You have touched their lives in so many ways and you will always be loved and remembered. All our love forever and always, Mom and Dad Todd and Tere

For Siblings...**I Wish**

I wish I could say that it gets easier. I wish it GOT easier.

The good news is that it does get easier to recognize when it will be difficult.

The passage of time, the repetition of holidays and of certain event, having gone through those occasions before lessens the anticipation.

I'm also a lot better at letting people know what I need from them.

And more importantly, what I don't.

--Jordon Ferber, Russell's brother

Table For Four

We walked slowly, cautiously, into

the musky, dim room. We had put on our Saturday best to eat steak, and take our minds off of the harsh reality of our new lives. In a daze, we almost ran into the hostess desk. She smiled, "A table for how many?" The question lingered in the air, on our minds, the words turning our stomachs. We shifted uncomfortably, waiting for one of us to answer the heart-stopping question.

My father's voice boomed as though he had no control. "We're 4." The number made me shudder, as hot tears burned behind my eyes. My mother's face had turned red. Tears rolled down her cheek uncontrollably. My brother stood in silence, eyes glazed over as if in a coma,

My brain told me NO, for I did not want to be here, but my legs told me Yes. My first steps were uneasy as though the ground had become soft. Together we solemnly walked to the table of our new life.

--Lauren Alpersteing, in memory of her brother and best friend, Ethan

River Reflections

I just got back from a river rafting trip, where I found myself thinking about my brother a lot. He died 16 months ago of an overdose of morphine.



I don't know why it happened; it happened. I didn't see the beginning of his life—he was three years older, but I saw the end. I can look at it now and see it in its entirety—his 33 years of living that I so much counted on and expected to last another 70 or 80 years. I thought I would always have him to talk to—about life, about family, and about ourselves.

The river was a meditative place for me. The rhythm of the oars, the gentle motion of the raft, the shore gliding by, the gurgle of the water as it seeped into and back out of our raft—all of this provided just enough stimulation and was hypnotic enough that I didn't want to do anything but sit and think. For a few days on the river, I floated without any of my day-to-day concerns, without the usual level of tension standing behind me.

What rose to the surface, visible in the clear water of my mind after the silt of all my worries sank to the bottom, were thoughts of my brother. Nat would have liked this trip. The rough beauty of the terrain and the quiet power of the water would not have been lost on him. He would have noticed

the beauty of the full moon and the light on the canyon walls as the sun rose and set.

I have felt a lot of anger at him for dying, for taking his own life, for engaging in an activity so dangerous, for playing Russian roulette, for committing suicide. He left no note, he didn't say good-bye; he left a wife and two sons whom he loved very much but who, like me, were not enough to keep him alive. It wasn't the anger, though, that I felt on the river. I just remembered him.

Grief is at its sharpest when, after a death, he all of a sudden flashes into focus so real and so present that I can hear his voice as if he has just spoken to me. I can imagine the scent of his hair, remember the texture of his face as I touch it, and I can see him walking and talking as if he were only there a moment ago. At these times, the grief flares up; the wound feels fresh and sharp with memories of the love, the charm, and the grace. I realize both with gratitude and with anguish for the wound this reality carries, that he is not someone I can let go. These memories will come to me for the rest of my life. He is truly a part of me. He is mixed up in my blood and my bones and the electrical impulses of my brain. And in whatever way all of these things go together to form a soul, he is a part of that too. There is no escaping him. This is the gift and the price of love—it doesn't end.

My brother was there in the river's sand and mud, in the full moon, the constantly flowing cold water, the clear dry air, the red canyon walls, and the blue sky. And he was there in me. And I was there, alive and more appreciative than I would have been before he died. I was more aware of my connection to my surroundings—that one day my body will be river mud, water, and bones like driftwood. What form my love will take then, I don't know. Maybe if there is a river and desert light offering delight to someone's senses, that will be enough. I don't know.

--Emily Moore TCF Los Angeles, CA
In Memory of my brother, Nat



For Grandparents...

Grandparents Are A Special Gift

Grandparents are a special gift
That God gives to each child.
Their love outshines the brightest star...
Their love can never be defiled.

Oh, but when a child becomes an angel,
 Grandparents feel the pain and sorrow.
 Beyond any pain they've known in life...
 Or will ever come to know tomorrow.
 For a grandparent holds a special love
 For the child their child has had.
 And, to lose what they hold dear...
 Leaves them heartbroken and sad.
 Their legacy is their grandchildren...
 So how can they learn to survive?
 Will the dreams of their tomorrows
 Somehow be kept alive?
 Yes, a grandparent is a survivor...
 And life has taught them how to be.
 For their wisdom, courage and love
 Is carried from them... to you and me.
 --Kaye Des'Ormeaux

From Our Members...



The Strength Of Butterflies

They didn't want to change. Their lives were full. The caterpillars crawled happily through the green leaves, played and rested in the sun, and ate their fill. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, they did change. Their luminous beauty now lights the skies, their colors are vibrant, their airy flight is delightful.

They didn't want to change. Their lives were full. They laughed and worked and sang and played; our children loved their lives. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, they did change. Beyond our own imaginations, they now live in indescribable harmony and perfect joy. Their new lives are a color invisible to us, but it is the color of eternity.

We didn't want to change. Our lives were full. We cared and nurtured and disciplined and laughed and mothered and fathered; we loved their lives and them. Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery, we have changed. Though fragile in our forever- longing for them, we are gifted with a growing, strength of spirit called HOPE. We are a resilient and enduring, new color as well, held close to our children by unbreakable threads of love that keep us tethered for a while yet, between earth and heaven.

--Mary Sue Zercher TCF, Marietta, GA
 Submitted by Linda Curtis

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.

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.



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.



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: Sept. 1st for Oct. birthdays). Otherwise they will appear if space permits or in the following month's issue.

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. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. 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.

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

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

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
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)	

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	

National Office Information

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 TCF. 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.

No donations were received this month.....

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

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

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

In loving memory of _____

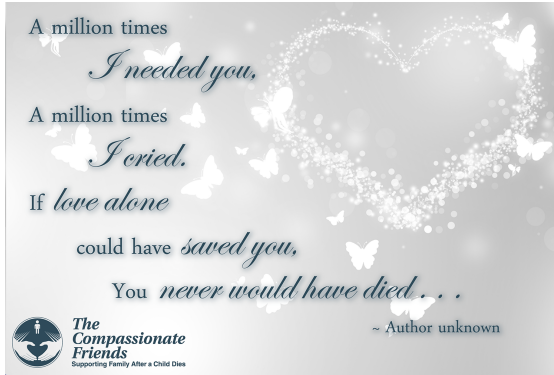
Birth date _____ Death date _____ Sent From _____

Tribute _____

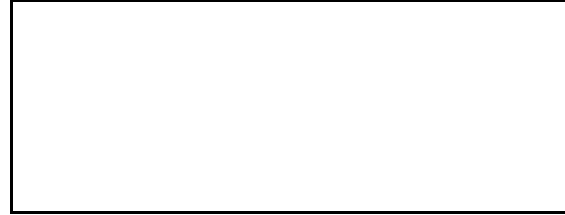
To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month or it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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Torrance, CA 90510-1171

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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.