



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

OCTOBER 2018 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be **Oct. 4th, 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 Oct. 4th meeting will start with "It's A Family Affair."

* 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 Dec. 9th World Wide Candle Lighting will take place at the St. James school in Torrance, on Anza/Garnet. We will be having a slide show of our children as part of the ceremony. Linda Zelik has volunteered to assemble this wonderful tribute. To have your child included, please send Linda 3 pictures of your child and include their birth and death date on each one. You can e-mail them to Lzelik@verizon.net before Nov. 15th or bring them to the next meeting so she has time to make the video.

The Oct. 4th meeting will start with “It’s A Family Affair”. Just like a rock thrown into water, the ripples affect family members differently. Everyone is touched, but each family member deals with their grief differently because they had a unique relationship with the deceased. When a child in a family dies, the emotional pain can be intense. It is tempting at times to try to run either into solitude or avoidance. A balance is needed to survive and live more than a resigned existence. That first necessary step is understanding. Looking at the various roles we play in our individual family, it only makes sense that we need to understand what other family members are dealing with after the death of a child. Understanding loss and grief from a family perspective makes it easier to respect the way we individually engage with each other, to heal not only as individuals but with the family as a whole. Join us as we share how we re-structured our remaining family after the loss of a child.

Dealing With Grief: Grief & the Family



Traditionally, the focus of grief has been on the individual. But my experiences—as a sister, daughter, and mother—have taught me that dealing with grief is not meant to be an individual process. Along with culture and religion, families teach us how to handle death, dying and grief. Understanding loss and grief from a family perspective enables families to engage in the work of grief together, to heal not only the individuals but the family as a whole.

Family Dealing = Family Healing

Though the emotions of grief can be a highly personal experience, families can learn to reach out and support one another, despite their differences. Family members can turn toward one

another in dealing with their grief, and families who are able to do so are more likely to find not only individual healing, but healing for the family unit as a whole. Families can unite under the weight of grief by following some of these simple tips:

Couples—remember to just be there for each other. It’s ok to grieve a little on your own, but don’t shut each other out. Make time to listen, to talk, to do things together, to just love each other. Be patient. **Parents**—remember, your children serve as care giver, and support your children in the meantime. Work to see the good in them, to recognize their efforts, to love them.

Children—are resilient but they have feelings too. Adults can help children identify and process what they feel. Validate that what they are experiencing is real. Let them know they are not alone. The family’s role is to provide the physical, loving attention we need through loss. As we read in the New Testament, “...ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy....” (John 16: 20-22). Families can not only survive, but thrive, if they allow their unique experiences of grief to knit them together and heal them as one.

Adapted from Dr Christina Hibbert’s Dealing with Grief article <http://www.drchristinahibbert.com/dealing-with-grief/grief-and-the-family/>

The Death of A Stepchild

Stepfamilies

The term step-parent covers a wide spectrum of relationships within today’s complicated second families. A stepfamily is created when two adults, one or both of whom already has a child or children, form a relationship where the new partner becomes an important adult or parental figure to the children. Adult sons and daughters can also become stepchildren if their single, widowed or divorced parent takes another partner. A step-parent can be someone who has been in this role for many years or is a recent family member or has joined the family after the death of a child.

Stepfamilies are complex and very diverse - there are many ways in which a stepfamily can be formed. What others call a family tree, stepfamilies describe as a family forest. The stepfamily may come about following bereavement, through single parenthood or after separation or divorce, and the stepchildren may live part- or full-time in the new family.

Those of us who have been step-parents for many years may find that some people do not

adequately recognize or acknowledge our grief and we may be overlooked in their concern for the birth-parent's welfare. This attitude is hurtful and can leave us feeling an outsider in our own family. Our feelings are important, however, and just as we may have loved and cared for our stepchild, so we feel grief and loss at their death.

Those of us who are recent family members may feel deep affection for the daughter or son of the partner we love, even though we may have known the child for only a short time. We will feel shock and grief over the death and be concerned for our partner and his or her children. We might, however, feel isolated when the family is going over earlier memories of the child, at the funeral or at later family gatherings. Finding a specific role may help us to feel more involved. Those step-parents who joined the family after the death of the child may also be affected by the feeling described above.

Nevertheless, we may be able to bring comfort, support and practical help to the parent and the family because our emotional involvement in the situation is less intense. It is not always easy, however, to understand the very profound and variable emotions that parents experience after the death of their child. The emotional seesaw of bereavement is as bewildering to the parent as it is to others, and can continue for a very long time; we may find we need exceptional tolerance and understanding.

If The Child's Other Parent Is Involved

The child's birth-parents may be drawn together at the dying and death of their child, perhaps even feeling that their child might still be alive if the marriage had survived. Either of the birth-parents may feel responsible for the death of their child, or that the other was to blame, and there may be feelings of anger, guilt, remorse and failure. These emotions may last for months or years. There may also be practical difficulties to be resolved, such as the wording on the headstone reflecting recognition and acceptance of both birth- and step-parents' deep feelings towards the child.

Some of us may have been deeply involved in raising the child, and could then feel excluded if the birth-parents come together to make the funeral arrangements. We may also be concerned about the possibility of the birth-parent continuing their involvement with our partner when the immediate practical need for meeting has passed.

Although our own feelings will be hard to cope

with, hopefully we will be able to give comfort to our partner by our physical presence, reassurance and affection.

Surviving Children

Sometimes the other children turn to us for guidance, support and reassurance. They may want to talk about their parents' grief, and about their dead sister or brother, perhaps sharing feelings they cannot express elsewhere. We can encourage the surviving children not to feel guilty that they are still alive. We will also be able to help them by taking an interest in their everyday lives and activities while our partner is finding it difficult to take their usual part in family life. We should try to ensure that other children in the family, or families, are included at this time, sharing tears and laughter, difficult and good memories.

Future Children

Some of us will be planning to have children in this new relationship. It could be painful to see the earlier death and its grief cast a shadow over our partner's feelings, as the memories fears and anxieties are carried forward. We may be able to help him or her by finding ways to talk through the past loss. If we can do this, we will be able to look to the future together while not forgetting what has gone before.

Grandparents (Birth And Step)

The child who died may have spent more time with one set of grandparents. All the grandparents, however, can be a resource to the grieving family in their different ways, and can help to bring comfort and stability to its members, especially the children. If the children can feel supported by all their extended family, then the various generations and branches of the family may grow closer together.

Emotions And Feelings

Death often evokes past losses, and each person's present grief will be affected by their own experiences. Our partner may have thought that feelings of loss relating to the end of the previous relationship were resolved, but now finds that painful issues are reemerging, particularly so if he or she was widowed. It may be that our partner has lost his or her only child, whereas we have surviving children; this can bring complicated guilt feelings, particularly for long-term step-parents.

We may find we are experiencing mixed feelings towards the child who died when we see how our partner and others in the family are suffering. Or we may regret that our relationship



with the stepchild was not as cordial as we would have wished. Perhaps we find the child's personality incompatible with ours. Alternatively the child may have rejected us, despite our continuing overtures of friendship. It often helps to acknowledge these feelings by writing them down, perhaps in the form of a diary or in a letter to the dead child which no-one need see, and which we need not keep for ever.

These difficulties may cause painful rifts in our relationship as we struggle to adjust to the child's death. Even though we may feel isolated at times, particularly if we have joined the family recently, we are also in a unique position to be of positive, practical and emotional help within the household.

However, while we are helping others in the family, remember that we too need support, perhaps from a friend or colleague who will allow us to talk about all that is going on at home. Reading about parental grief can be of value and may help us understand our partner's feelings and reactions.

Hope For The Future

For step-parents, the grief experience may be a precarious journey as we try to balance the needs of our partner, our own feelings and other family relationships. We do, however, have a supportive role to play and it is a time when patience, understanding and tolerance are of the utmost value.

Many step-parents have found hope for the future through TCF, sharing experiences, feelings and concerns with other parents, perhaps meeting, or corresponding with, other stepparents in an atmosphere of acceptance and friendship.

-- from TCF National UK

Sisters and Brothers



Adult siblings' grief may be overlooked. Yes, it is dreadful for our parents when our sibling, their child, dies. Horrific actually, made even more so because we know. We see it in their faces and feel it in their words. We know because we may be parents ourselves and the thought of losing one of our children is unfathomable. It's also awful for our sibling's spouse and their children. We see and feel it in their faces and wonder how they will survive. And, it is dreadful for us too. We've lost our mirror, our confidante, in some cases our anchor and the person we expected to be with us forever.

Our families are changed, scarred. The absence of our sibling, and sometimes their entire family, at holiday events, cuts to the core. And, for many bereaved siblings, we've lost our stories. Our parents, so traumatized by the death of their child, can no longer bear to speak their name. There are no "remember when ..." stories ending with laughter; we learn that just mentioning our sibling's name causes too much pain. As one bereaved sibling said to me, "You quickly get to know what you can and can't say". This place or role as "grief observer" versus "griever" is lonely.

It's easy to make the leap that our own grief must somehow be less than that of other "closer" family. "You hear it enough; you start to think maybe you really shouldn't be feeling so bad. Maybe something is wrong with me", a bereaved sister said to me. Losing a sibling at any age matters. It is a profound loss and just hearing the words, "this must be so hard for you", can mean so much. For me, writing and finding ways to continue sharing stories about my brother were and are the best gifts anyone could offer me. When I talk about him, he's with me. And I like that.

-- Brenda Marshall from Brothers and Sisters, TCF Victoria, Australia, Sibling

Death From A Grandparent's Point Of View

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives: family and friends and even strangers. I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the love a grandparent has for a grandchild and the loss that is felt when the child dies.

For a grandparent, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on her face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and the questions so many. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss away the hurt as you did when he was a child for you don't understand the many feelings you are experiencing yourself. Each day you hope and pray for a little something to say or do that will be of comfort to them. It seems that there is no end to the suffering. As time goes slowly by, the healing process begins.

In time, a ray of hope will show on her face and a smile will make his eyes light up again.

Your child will turn to you for what comfort that you can give. There will always be a part of you that is gone, but in time you can learn to live with the part that is still there.

-- Ruth Eaton, TCF, Savannah, GA

The Impact of Grief on Marriage: Coping Strategies

The death of a child can have a profound effect upon a marriage or close relationship. The following are some coping strategies.

1. Try to verbalize your feelings to each other. Use "I feel" statements, not "I think" statements.
2. Try to recognize and respect your spouse's grief style and coping strategies. It is important to remember that not everyone grieves the same way at the same time. When you are at different places in your grief (ie. One spouse wants to put up pictures of your child all around the house, and the other spouse cannot bear to look at pictures just yet; or one spouse wants to clear out the child's room and the other one wants to leave it as it is), work on some kind of compromise where you can, so both of your needs can be met.
3. Do an unexpected kindness for your spouse, for no apparent reason, when it is least expected.
4. Try to be a good listener when your spouse needs to talk. Don't judge or evaluate what you are hearing; just listen to the words and feelings being expressed. Don't think you have to respond or rush to say something; sometimes your silence can encourage discussion.
5. If you can't talk, try writing notes to each other. Being uncommunicative is nearly always worse than expressing something negative.
6. Recognize and compliment the positive in your spouse.
7. Allow yourself and your spouse to be human. Sometimes that means you want to be selfish and meet your own needs; sometimes that means you put your own needs aside (temporarily) for the sake of your spouse's needs.
8. When stress is high, touch your spouse. Touching can diminish anger (but remember that sometimes when we're angry at our spouse, we want to stay angry, and we don't allow ourselves to get into a situation where we will have to touch).
9. Try to learn to laugh together.

10. Never assume what is going on in your spouse's head. It is better to inquire: "Did I do or say something to upset you?" or "You seem preoccupied. Can you talk about it?"

11. Work at being patient. . . with yourself and with your spouse, and work at rebuilding your commitment to each other as husband and wife.

--Adapted from material by Joe and Elizabeth Rousseau, TCF, Saginaw, Michigan

About Feeling Guilty

Do you blame yourself?

Are you strangled by the burden of things you did not do and things you should have done, as if these were the things that killed him? What can you do with this relentless torment?

Dear Griever,

Take time to remember that grief makes all of us look for escape routes where there may be no escape.

Death is not in your hands.

Grief makes you look for reasons, where often there are no reasons.

Blame is not the answer.

Hold onto your heart now with the tenderness your love deserves

--Sacha Wagner from Wintersun

The Grief Puzzle

Grief is not a smorgasbord where you go down the line picking a little this and a little that. Grief is like a jigsaw puzzle. Some people get all the edge pieces together first and work from the outside in. Others dump everything out on the table at once and dive right into the middle. Some never even open the box at all. They just look at the picture on the lid and what's inside the box doesn't match or make sense.

You meet a lot of people when you start a jigsaw puzzle. Some are full of advice, or they may try to make the puzzle look the way it ought to be instead of the way it is. But, once in awhile, you meet someone who shares their finished puzzle and helps you to make some sense of yours. Then you find it is not as hard as before. Some of the pieces fit together more easily, and you sigh with relief... and remember.

-- Victoria Guthrie TCF, Tampa FL



I Will Never Be the Same Person...

I will never be the same person I was before my oldest son was killed while riding his motorcycle. The other driver didn't see him before he pulled in front of him.

When Eli died, the monstrous size of my grief caused me to have different thinking patterns, and definitely it caused a different outlook on what is and what isn't important in my life. Suddenly, I inherited a different personality or two. I became very forgiving of circumstances that I wouldn't have tolerated before. Most issues became really insignificant to me. I would say "don't sweat the small stuff." The matters which had been very traumatic to me at the time were so petty in comparison to my grief. It has been almost two years since Eli died, and once again I am taking a different view of what's important to me. I still think that most issues are "small stuff." But I am slowly becoming aware of my life and I am able to "sweat some stuff" now and again.

The other personality was very unsympathetic and had no empathy for other people's distress. I regarded everybody else's problems small in comparison to mine. Therefore, I had no compassion for their hurt. After all mine was bigger. When the impacts of remembering other people were suffering too, I was humbled. In the pain and grief of losing my child, I couldn't see or understand anyone else's pain. Perhaps they didn't lose a child, but their suffering was as real as mine.

I also discovered there is a "Before Eli died and an After Eli died" sequence in relation to any event. I either say it, or think it before I start a sentence. At first I counted the days Eli had been gone, then it was the weeks. Now I am going to begin counting the years ... it seems impossible. I now have hope that maybe time does soften the edges of my grief. I will never be the same person I was before Eli died, but this different person will be fine.

--Tony M. Sandoval, TCF, Pueblo Ark Valley, CO

I wasn't prepared for the fact that grief is so unpredictable. It wasn't just sadness, and it wasn't linear. Somehow I'd thought that the first days would be the worst and then it would get steadily better— like getting over the flu. That's not how it was.

--Maureen O'Roke

WHY ME? —The Unanswerable Question

Most of us have pondered this question at sometime in our lives, especially since the death of our children. It resurfaces periodically in discussions with the newly bereaved. I have never been completely satisfied with the responses given and have gone away considering "Why me?" to be an unanswerable question.

That was until recently when an article was brought to my attention. The writer states that no one is immune to disaster. "Whatever else separates us, suffering is the common bond of our humanity." He told the tale of several people shattered by great losses, including the death of a child, each searching for an answer to "Why, why me?"

They came together in their suffering. Though unable to prevent the pain, these fellow grievers found that by sharing their hurt, standing together and supporting one another they could endure devastating losses.

"Why me?" is a singular and lonely question, but it doesn't have to be. Together we can give hope to the hopeless and comfort to the suffering. All we need to do is reach out, then maybe the "Why me?" will answer itself.

--Polly Moore TCF, Nashville, TN



Coping With October

The coming of autumn with the beautiful colors of the leaves and their falling will bring different emotions to different families. Maybe your family had a tradition of driving through particularly scenic areas. Maybe the child you lost was the one who raked the leaves. Perhaps all of this will simply be a reminder that winter and a barren landscape are coming.

Halloween is a favorite holiday for most children, but it can be hard for bereaved parents. This formerly innocent holiday, the yards decorated as graveyards with markers and ghosts and skeletons, the stores of unhappy spirits that must walk the earth, all have a completely different impact on us now.

Many of us have opened the door to give out treats and been faced with a costume so similar to one our child wore for a Halloween past that either we really want to pull aside the mask to see the face behind or we want to dream that this was one last visit from our precious child.

Some parents have surviving children who still want to join in the fun - and, oh, how hard it is to "trick or treat" when you feel the victim of the ultimate "trick".

Stop and think - What can you do differently? For autumn and its beauties and chores, what routines can you change? Hire someone or ask a friend who has been offering to help and asking for specific tasks. Maybe you could do it together. For Halloween, take surviving children to a carnival (many schools and churches sponsor these). Or, if a carnival was an every year event, go to the zoo or go door-to-door this year. If you don't have surviving children wanting to celebrate, maybe you can leave your house dark and go to a movie and skip the holiday. In any event, planning ahead will help you get through a difficult time.
--Tracy Stackhouse BP/USA, Central Arkansas

Where Does The Sister Come In?

My brother was killed.
He was murdered for no reason at all.
My pain is so sharp, so close.
But they think I shouldn't be suffering as much ...
As much as his wife, who grieves for her love and her future.
As much as his son, who will never know his daddy.
As much as his parents, who have lost their only son, their first born, their child.
I have lost my closest friend; the man I admired most in my world; the person I spent most of my free time with - only for the company; the person I played Yahtzee with until 2:00am, knowing I'd beat him soon; the boy I grew up with and followed around constantly; the love that only a brother and sister can know; the respect he had for me; the talks and the personal jokes.
I have lost my brother. It hurts just as much.
--Bridgette Huard, Yakima, WA

NOT A Matter Of Choice

Our son Keith was 29 years old when he decided to end his life by suicide in 1999. Suicide is a frightening word, and it is not only ignorance but fear and stigma that keep people from understanding why someone would take their own life. In a way, it is easier to think that a person made a "choice", freeing us from knowing the truth.

The word "choice" continues to perpetuate the

stigma of suicide. The definition "choice" is "the freedom in choosing, both in the way one chooses and in the number of possibilities from which to choose." In a pre-suicidal state, an individual is overwhelmed in a given situation. They suffer extreme mental anguish and a painful sense of hopelessness. Their sense of judgment is distorted, and they do not have the ability to make "choices" or options. They usually want to kill the pain rather than themselves.

Suicidal people may be unable to restrain themselves from acting on feelings or impulses. This strong impulse to end the pain is often due to the depletion of the chemical called serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical within the brain that helps restrain impulsive behavior.

"There is no suffering greater than that which drives people to suicide. Suicide defines the moment in which mental pain exceeds the human capacity to bear it. It represents the abandonment of hope," says John T. Maltzberger, M.D., past president of the American Association of Suicidology, practicing psychiatrist and teacher at Harvard Medical School.

Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death in the USA and the second leading cause of death for those ages 25-34. About 30,000 of the 650,000 Americans who attempt suicide each year die. Suicide is almost always the result of depression, an illness of the brain.

We can only imagine the horrible mental torture our son Keith endured. Depression is one of the most terrible and pervasive illnesses of our day. In 1999, the Surgeon General of the United States listed suicide as a national public crisis. Having accurate information about depression is critical. We live in a world where people hang onto old stereotypes. In order to stop future loss of lives by suicide, we must make certain to take advantage of any opportunity to encourage greater awareness. In that goal, we can make great strides to ensure that these stereotypes cease to persist.

--Carol Loehner, TCF/Heart of Florida Chapter



Truth is Freedom

I walk with a limp dragging this ball and chain.
It cracks the concrete and digs into the dirt.
Sometimes I carry it to feel its weight.
40 lbs. The weight of my son.
That's the burden I bare

But it's mine, familiar and comforting.
 Actually, I don't know where I would be without it.
 Without being tethered to yesterday?
 Who would I be?
 Without the emotions the memory? If I sever this
 connection what would become of us?
 Because I am tired of this ball and chain. It's
 weight.
 But how do I lose it without closing the door on my
 son? On us?
 So I will fight to keep our connection alive.
 I will suffer but I will endure.
 They say forgiveness is accepting that the past will
 never be any different.
 But I am weary of this prison called memory.
 After all my son told me at the wise age of three ...
 "Daddy I want you to be happy".
 I want to honor this. I need to. I will. But how?
 A friend told me that grief is the price of love.
 And I have paid a heavy one.
 But I am tired of paying this debt.
 There is nothing more difficult than letting go of the
 people we love.
 To let go of our child, our self, our future.
 To strip yourself of all your cares.
 To be alone and naked.
 Just like when you were born.
 It's now that I realize that I cut my son's chord to
 his mother so he could live and thrive.
 So he could be free.
 Because if love is possessed then life is taken
 from it and it's reduced from a fire to a flame.
 For love to be real it must be set free.
 Free to follow it's own path.
 If real, it will come back to you like a bird to it's
 nest.
 Once back it will liberate you because to really
 know love you must be free yourself.
 Free from the chains of attachment.
 From the web of desire.
 For one cannot hold on to love or even pursue it.
 We can only open our hearts to it like a flower
 blooms for the butterfly. Though dependent on
 each other they are both free.
 Free, yet still connected eternally.
 --Chris W. Smith, TCF-Contra Costa County Chpt.

Newly Bereaved...

Please Be Gentle

Please be gentle with me for
 I am grieving. The sea I swim is a lonely one, and



the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair
 numb my soul as I struggle through each day.

My heart is heavy with sorrow, I want to shout
 and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times,
 my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so
 great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on
 with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can
 begin to heal. Companion me through my tears
 and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I
 am in my journey, not where you think I should be.

Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell
 it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp
 the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the
 weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I
 seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still
 burns within my heart, and shared memories may
 trigger both laughter and tears. I need your
 support and understanding. There is no right or
 wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path.
 Please, will you walk beside me?

--Jill Englar

Seasoned Grievers...

Afterglow

We came to the beach in Florida intending to
 watch the sun set over the Gulf. The sun had
 already disappeared over the horizon, apparently
 lost beyond the waters. After a brief period,
 emerging from where the sun had set arose a
 brilliant afterglow, seemingly covering the sky with
 a growing, pulsating display of molten gold.

I was struck by the spectacular beauty
 emanating from the sun already gone from view.
 Involuntarily I thought, just like our children! When
 the sunshine of their lives disappeared, we
 expected eternal darkness to remain. After our
 initial period of grief, we find that each child has
 left an afterglow – the memories of the beauty and
 joy their lives brought us.

It is incumbent upon each of us left on the
 beach of mortal life to allow ourselves to maintain
 that afterglow and continue to bring meaning to the
 "suns" of our lives who have disappeared from
 view "over the horizon."

Hopefully, we can help one another honor our
 children's lives by perpetuating their afterglow with
 our own meaningful lives of hope, optimism, and
 peace.

--Toba S. Cohen, TCF, Bustleton, PA

Friends and Family...



Dear “General Public, Friends And Relations,”

Allow us to share with you a little of what we are feeling and how you can help and support us. First of all, we have suffered a tremendous loss, and we need to grieve. Even though this may make it uncomfortable for you to be around us, it's something we must do. We won't be “over it” in a few weeks or months, as you might expect. Hopefully, we will learn to live with it, and cope with it.

If, in the first stages of our grief, we seem to talk incessantly about our child, how much we loved him, and all the details of his death, just listen to us and “be there.” It is one of the kindest things you can do for us. Even in the future, would you give us the freedom and pleasure to talk of our dead child? Please mention his name from time to time or relate something you remember about him. It makes us feel good when someone else remembers!

Some of the problems bereaved parents face as part of their grief work are:

- Restoring emotional balance
- Deciding what to do with our child's belongings
- Lacking motivation
- Dealing with guilt and anger
- Feeling the intensity of the hurt
- Knowing the individuality of grief
- Handling anniversary dates, both birth and death
- Delaying major decisions for at least a year (moving, job changes, etc.)
- Experiencing marital discord
- Going to the cemetery
- Remembering our child in special ways
- Feeling that “we are different”
- Dealing with the question, “How many children do you have?”

So you can see that grieving is work. It's something we must do for our health's sake. A Compassionate Friends meeting is one of the few places where we feel at ease talking of our child—where we feel not so different and alone, and where tears are not intimidating to those around us.

If we sound a bit selfish, I guess grieving at first, is selfish. Only after we resolve the many feelings that we have and accept the fact that our child is indeed dead, can we reach out to help

others, experience growth and live again in a full and productive way. We try not to be critical of you... After all, before our child died, we were the “General Public, Friends, and Relations.”

Thanks for this opportunity to share some of our feelings. We need your help and support!

Sincerely, A Typical Bereaved Parent

--Carolyn Reincke - TCF, Ft. Wayne, IN

Welcome...



Who We Are

We are The Compassionate Friends. We are your organization. We are you. No better, no smarter, no more experienced (well, maybe slightly, only because we have been at it longer), just fellow bereaved parents struggling along. We come from all walks of life. We are just people, grieving parents (siblings and grandparents) who are trying to help themselves and others. No pat answers, no glib replies, no religion, no color, and no judgment ... truly, WE ARE YOU.

You may not know us all well. Say nothing or say a lot. No barriers, no requirements. Only the promise that whether you listen or lead, you will find genuine understanding and shared experiences. Come to a meeting and realize that you are truly not alone in your grief and loneliness, in your anger, and the craziness and pain. WE ARE YOU!

-- from TCF/ Portland, Oregon newsletter

Editor's Note: While we may not have all the answers you need, hearing from other bereaved parents what helped them, can be very helpful. Join us and see for yourself how TCF can help.

Book Review...



In Naming the Child by: Jenny Schroedel. Hope and healing for those who suddenly find themselves in the most terrible sort of grief. For those who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of a child within the first year, this gentle resource offers: stories of hope and wisdom; practical advice and guidance, based on the experience of many; comfort and ways to honor and remember.

Helpful Hint...



Fear

Fear is the constant, nagging companion of every bereaved parent who has surviving children – and there isn't a darn thing we can do about it. A surviving child needs to live a "normal" growing-up child's life. As parents, we MUST hold back, MUST "let go", and NOT be so "overprotective" of our child(ren) that we screw up their growing-up time and deprive them of the experiences they need to mature into adulthood. Our hell of the fear of loss of another child must not become their hell of being overprotected.

Fear. It doesn't go away. WE must control it ... but please don't ask me how.

--Tom Crouthamel, TCF, Sarasota/Bradenton, FL

Darryl the Sentinel



He sat in the bay window, watching
Listening for your truck, for your
steps on the sidewalk

Every morning for three weeks, between six and
six-thirty.

This loyal friend didn't understand
Why you never came, why you'd deserted him.
He, who loved you, who would announce your
arrival

Telling us: Hey! Hey! He's here!

Could not understand where you'd gone,
Or why you'd stay away from him.

He grieved as much as we.

He became depressed and listless.

He slept more and more, and ate less and less.

"Do something," I told your dad, "

Or he'll die, too," missing you.

So one morning at the appointed time

Your dad got Darryl's leash and stood at the front
door.

Slowly, Darryl came from the window

For the chance to go find you himself.

They started in the driveway at your truck.

Your dad opened the door, let him sniff the seats,
the floor.

Smelling you, but not seeing you,

He was ready to look elsewhere.

So they began their early morning walks,

Fairly short walks, around a block or two,

To prove you weren't close by.

And after all, Darryl is getting old,

And your dad is not young anymore.

What began for the dog has helped them

both see that, yes, you aren't coming anymore

And the world is still intact and the sun will rise on
another day.

For now, they have each other

And Darryl is satisfied and living again.

--Mona Follis, TCF Sugar Land -SW Houston, TX

Halloween # 8

What would you be this year my dear,
on this, your 8th Halloween?

Would you share your candy with your siblings?

Would you be the first home with your goodies?

What would you have dressed in from age 1 to 7?

We'll never know, 'cause you are in Heaven.

This I wish, this frightful night,

Wach over your siblings,

And sleep well, my precious angel in flight

--Cathy Bender, Mandy's mother, Southern NV
BP/USA

A Season of Many Feelings

Fall is a season of many feelings; autumn is here
once again as it comes every year, and as with the
leaves, my falling tears.

This time of year is the hardest of all. My heart is
still breaking, once again it is fall.

Memories once so vivid are seeming to fade. My
time spent with you seems of another age.

This season reminds me of grief and of pain. But
yet teaches hope and joy once again.

For the trees are still living beneath their gray bark,
and you my sweet child, are alive in my heart.

--Cinda S., TCF Butler, PA

How does one measure how long it has been?

By the number of sunsets or by the tears that have
fallen?

The sweet solitude of slumber gives way to
morning-teared memories of all that used to be
when I had you safe inside of me.

Our time together is no more.

Only God knows why you went away.

Sometimes I forget you are no longer here as I
lovingly whisper your name.

And then I remember ... and life is not the same.

-- Debbie Dickinson



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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christie Hagenburger
Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17
Father: D.W. Hagenburger

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Alberto Lopez
Born: 8/66 Died: 2/12
Mother: Albertina Lopez

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew "Matty" Louis Matich
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Mother: Shirley Matich

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brittany Anne Suggs
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/16
Mother: Camille Suggs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

David Michael Villarreal
Born: 11/90 Died: 2/18
Parents: David & Barbara Villarreal

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

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

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:

Sorry, no birthday tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...



Do You Know What I Hear You Say?

One day last fall, my daughter Niki called. "I'm taking Friday off as a personal day. Could you come up?"
"Sure," I said. (I have Fridays off.)
"What's up?"

"I need a day off and I want to spend it with you. Niki, my workaholic daughter, taking off - I felt flattered.
"I'll be there around 10:00."
Friday was a beautiful day, sun

glistening on the dew in the fields, the sky a robins-egg blue, a mild breeze blowing through the open car window-one of those days when you're almost glad you're alive.

Niki is a special ed teacher in Montello and lives in Westfield with her husband. She married the summer after Todd died. We chatted for a while, and then decided to go to a mom & pop restaurant for lunch. Walking back with sun shining, trees rustling and dried leaves crunching under our feet, I asked, "So how come you decided to take the day off?"

"I've been feeling stressed lately." Her students, I thought. She often talked about her kids and the special problems they had.

"What about?" I asked.

"You." Silence. She handed me a piece of paper. "Do you want me to read it now?" I said nervously.

"When we get back to my place."

We sat on the steps of the small porch leading to the second story apartment. I unfolded the single sheet of paper and read.

Dedicated to my mother

I cried so many tears this weekend (we went to a TCF conference in Dubuque). You thought they were for Todd, but actually they were for you. I miss you both so much. You say ... Cindi (my other daughter) & Todd were like twins. I hear ... that Todd's and my relationship wasn't as good, that I wasn't a very good sister. You say ... that Cindi doesn't talk much and you worry about her constantly. I hear ... that even though I don't talk either, you don't notice. You say "you want to die, you just want the pain to go away. I hear ... that I am insignificant to you and that my life isn't important enough to stick around for. I love you so much, Mom, and I know you love me too, but that's not what I hear you say. I'm sorry Todd isn't here. I'd give anything to bring him back again so that I could see you happy. So that we could all be happy. Please, someday, please say: "Niki really loved Todd ... because I did/do. "Niki, how do you feel? "Niki, I want to live because I know you need me to be here.

Your oldest daughter, Niki

We held each other and cried that afternoon and talked, really talked. I think I've done better. Sometimes it's hardest to say the right things to the people we really love, especially our other children. Thank you, Niki, for being brave enough to write this and for allowing me to print it. I think you've spoken in behalf of many siblings.

--Barb Seth TCF, Madison, WI



Sisters and Brothers

Adult siblings' grief may be overlooked. Yes, it is dreadful for our parents when our sibling, their child, dies. Horrific actually, made even more so because we know. We see it in their faces and feel it in their words. We know because we may be parents ourselves and the thought of losing one of our children is unfathomable. It's also awful for our sibling's spouse and their children. We see and feel it in their faces and wonder how they will survive. And, it is dreadful for us too. We've lost our mirror, our confidante, in some cases our anchor and the person we expected to be with us forever.

Our families are changed, scarred. The absence of our sibling, and sometimes their entire family, at holiday events, cuts to the core. And, for many bereaved siblings, we've lost our stories.

Our parents, so traumatized by the death of their child, can no longer bear to speak their name. There are no "remember when ..." stories ending with laughter; we learn that just mentioning our sibling's name causes too much pain. As one bereaved sibling said to me, "You quickly get to know what you can and can't say". This place or role as "grief observer" versus "griever" is lonely.

It's easy to make the leap that our own grief must somehow be less than that of other "closer" families. "You hear it enough; you start to think maybe you really shouldn't be feeling so bad. Maybe something is wrong with me", a bereaved sister said to me. Losing a sibling at any age matters. It is a profound loss and just hearing the words, "this must be so hard for you", can mean so much. For me, writing and finding ways to continue sharing stories about my brother were and are the best gifts anyone could offer me. When I talk about him, he's with me. And I like that.

-- Brenda Marshall from Brothers and Sisters, TCF Victoria, Australia, Sibling

What About Me?

Have you ever felt that as a surviving brother or sister, we are often forgotten? I have felt this way quite often in the last six years. Over time, the feeling becomes less and less.

Our parents' grief is so much different from ours. No more or less hurtful than ours, but different. They lost their child. I hope that in my lifetime, I never have to know how that feels. I

know how painful it was when Sean died. I don't want to know the pain of having a child die. But, often times, we are the "forgotten mourners". I love my brother very much and miss him just as much. I think that people sometimes forget that we are hurting too.

I know they know my sister and I were hurting, but they were so wrapped up in what they were feeling that they didn't have time to worry about what we were feeling. I tried so hard to make my parents well again that I neglected my grief. Pretty much denied it. We really want to make our families "normal" again.

I have had some awful things said to me over the last six years. Two weeks after Sean died, someone said to me, "Well, you do still have a sister." Well, yes, I do still have a sister, but that still doesn't lessen the pain of my brother's death and my sister can't possibly replace my brother. Probably the worst thing anyone has said to me is "Why aren't you over this? Sean had been dead for six months." Well, it is not something you just "get over".

I have learned a lot of things over the years and if I hadn't been in such a state of shock, maybe I would have had some good responses. When I think back on it, I wish I had. I have decided that, from what I have learned, I need to educate people and make them understand that siblings and friends have the right to grieve too.

As surviving siblings and friends, we also have to realize that we need to find a new "normal." We also need to know that it's okay to feel all of the things that we feel, be it anger, sadness, guilt, or any other emotion. Just know that it is all right to think and talk about them when you're ready, not when someone else says or things you should be ready. Death and grieving are, unfortunately, a part of life.

--Traci Morlock TCF St. Louis Chpt. BP/USA

For Grandparents...



Story Time

Story time came early this week, i.e. on a Monday (25/11/02) at lunchtime instead of on a Tuesday evening.

Aidan was awake (or conscious anyway) so I asked whether he would like a story, or to listen to some music. He said he would like a story. I raced out to the large book collection to try and find a suitable story. I selected the "Rhymes for Annie Rose and read a few poems to him.

Dad was waiting to take him up to the school to see classmates and as the awake time did not last long, I could not delay his departure for school for very long. Over the past week I was extremely fortunate to be able to spend some quality time with Aidan, sitting with him listening to music, massaging his tiny back or holding his hand.

Various family members and close friends also spent quality time with him. He was not left alone and he was aware of family and friends being with him. He acknowledged a person's presence with a nod or a hello or a hug. He was that sort of special child. One day when I asked how he was, he gave me a thumbs up.

Aidan has always been a "man's man" but we had a good relationship nonetheless. I used to take him shopping on a Saturday morning and while he was sitting up like Jacky in the baby seat (and later the booster seat) we used to play a game about how many people loved Aidan. He has a very large family and it was quite a task to remember all the names. I followed up the game at our weekly story time and "tuck into bed" time. I freely told him how much I loved him and how much he was loved. For anyone lucky enough to have grandchildren, they will know about the special bond between a grandparent and a grandchild.

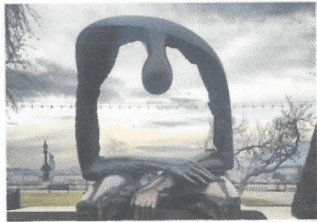
Aidan died just a few minutes after midnight on 27/11/02 after a courageous 3 year battle with a brain tumor. He died physically but his spiritual presence is very much still here. On the day of Aidan's funeral one of our rose bushes called 'Joyfulness' was brimming with blooms, so I took two roses (one each for my husband and me) to place into his grave.

After Aidan died, various friends bought special roses for me to plant in the garden. The roses were bought for their names. My Aidan memorial rose garden now contains: 'Angel Face', 'Superstar', 'Happy Child', 'Hero', and 'The Children's Rose. Having a special area set aside has been very healing for my husband and me. The garden also provides us with roses to take to the cemetery to place on Aidan's grave.

We had no sooner put the roses down when a couple of kangaroos came forward and took the tops off the roses. Initially I was upset but my husband pointed out that, as Aidan had a real sense of mischief about him, he would have laughed at the antics of the kangaroos.

--Tricia Engler Grandmother (Ganma) of Aidan
The Compassionate Friends Mandurah, 12/15

From Our Members...



"We may look as if we carry on with our lives as before. We may even have times of joy and happiness. Everything may seem 'normal'. But this, 'Emptiness' is

how we all feel....all the time."

--Original artist: Alan György. Bronze statue located at Lake Geneva, Switzerland.

Submitted by Micki Ishikawa in memory of Steven

Daisies in Huge Handfuls

"Pick more daisies" was the most popular expression in our family. I picked it up from a magazine article about a 94 year old lady in Kentucky who, when asked what she would do differently if she had her life to live over, responded "I would take more chances; I would eat more ice cream and less beans; I would have more real troubles but fewer imaginary ones; I would climb more mountains; I would swim more rivers, and I would pick more daisies."

Our son, Mark, seized the daisy expression as the theme both for his life and his entrance exam essay at UCLA. It helped him live his brief 18 years; his essay helped him get an academic scholarship.

Daisies became our family flower. They marked our attitude about living. And they marked our son's memorial service. After it was over, his friends and fraternity brothers each threw a daisy into the ocean. Daisies still mark his grave every week. It has taken me almost two years to return to really thinking about daisies and what that quote by a 94-year-old lady really means. During that time I made a pretty big mess of things. I did the best I could, but I was often going through the motions outside, but empty inside.

To me, what this quote means is we really do have to pull ourselves together again and go on. Dr. Charles Heuser, a former pastor at our church, notes "going through the steps of grief is like walking through the valley and shadow of death. Keep walking, but don't camp there."

Our children would not want us to "camp there," but to go pick more daisies—to somehow live an even more meaningful life in their name. As I go on I am truly a different person. I don't suffer fools or superficiality very well any more. As one of my best friends said..."I get tired of beige

people." Yet, I will drop everything to help another bereaved parent. I certainly have more "real troubles and fewer imaginary ones." But it's OK—I like myself better that way.

And I am returning to embrace life each day again. But this time I am following my heart instead of my expected career. I am taking more chances, climbing more unfamiliar mountains, and picking daisies in huge handfuls.

Mark would want it so.

--Rich Edler

TCF South Bay, CA

We welcome and encourage you to submit contributions you found meaningful to you in your grief. We prefer your original poems and thoughts, but we can also print other material if proper credit is given to the author. Please 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: Oct. 1st for Nov. 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) 938-2409
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.Livealone.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
survivorsof suicide.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:

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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 <http://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. If you want the convenience of using a credit card, we now have a credit card or pay-pal account for donations.

Use the "Donate Link" on our Website at www.tcfsbla.org
Or if you prefer, you can always mail in a check to the P.O. Box

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

In loving memory of Edward W. Myricks II, April 1972 - October 2011. "Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go." ~ quote by Jamie Anderson
Eddie, this month makes your 7th year "Angel Anniversary". If we could, we'd put our arms around you, hold you tight and tell you how much we love you.

We all love and miss you so very much,
Eddy, Sandra, and Sister Audrey

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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October 2018

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,
just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.
We are young, and we are old.

Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh
and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,
while some of us are struggling to find answers.
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,
while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other
our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love
to share the pain as well as the joy,
share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts,
and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

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