



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

DECEMBER 2018 ISSUE

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**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be Dec. 6th, first Thursday  
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

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

**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 Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> meeting will start with "Holidays And Our Grief."

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.

A new chapter of TCF has started in Manhattan Beach. More info on page 15.

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**Thursday, December 6th** will be our regular meeting at the church. If we are not in our usual room, (the church often uses our room to set up for their Dec. festivities) just follow the signs down the hall to the meeting. The topic will start with "Holidays and Our Grief". We have several handouts and ideas for taking care of yourself and ways to survive this hectic time of the year. Come join us as we share ways to take care of ourselves, honor our departed children, and face the upcoming holiday season while grieving our losses.



TCF invites all Bereaved Parents, Siblings, Grandparents and Friends, to attend the Annual World Wide Candle Lighting Service held on **Sunday, Dec. 9th at 6:30 PM.** This year the event will be held indoors at St. James School's O'

Gorman Center in Torrance. The address is 4625 Garnet Street, Torrance. On the corner of Garnet and Anza) *The parking lot entrance is on the west side of Anza Ave., north of Garnet St.* The chapter will supply the candles. Please bring cookies or finger food to share after the program. We are joining with tens of thousands of TCF members, relatives, and supporters around the world who will start lighting their candles in New Zealand at 7p.m. their local time. Please arrive by 6:30 so we can start the program and will be ready to light our candles promptly at 7 Pacific time. By lighting our candles for this hour we are helping to create a wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone and encircles the globe for 24 hours. We do this in remembrance of all our children... that their light may always shine.

## Excerpts From Handling The Holiday Hurts

The holidays are often difficult for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one. This statement is especially true for parents who have had a child die. For some parents the holiday with all of its rich traditions brings extra stress and pressure. Instead of being a time of comfort, togetherness, and joy, the sights, sounds, smells and holiday gatherings can bring feelings of defeat, unhappiness, meaninglessness, and worthlessness. Still for others Holiday Traditions and Rituals offer a way to remember their child

and offers them permission to comfortably express their emotions.

Parents often talk about the expectations others have for them; the requirements placed on them, and the demands to "be back to normal" before the holidays. One mother stated, "It's like everyone "needs" me to be ok. How can I be? My daughter died on Christmas day. I'm going to be spending my holiday thinking of her and visiting the cemetery. How can that be normal? Why would I want to go to a party that day?" Another mother tearfully said, "The holidays are intended for children. Toy commercials and ads are everywhere. People are talking about the gifts they are going to give to their children and others. One even went so far as to ask me to find a play gym for her new baby! I find it surprising that everyone expects me to smile and never cry. They expect me to help them, and to be understanding of their wants and needs and now both families expect me to make Christmas cookies and take my turn hosting the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. How can I be kind when they don't even say our son's name, they don't talk about him, they don't ask how we are doing, and they don't take our feelings into consideration."

Overcoming these types of frustrations is not easy. Parents often have difficulty making decisions regarding the holidays. Everything from holiday baking to family gatherings has changed. Be gentle with yourself, and allow yourself to do what feels right, even if others disapprove.

♥ Give Yourself Permission to Express Your Feelings.

♥ Talk about your feeling and grief.

♥ Talk about your child.

♥ Spend time looking at pictures and other keepsakes.

♥ Play music that you find comfort in.

♥ Do what is right for you, not someone else.

♥ Participate in carefully selected functions.

♥ Tailor your activities.

♥ Acknowledge your feeling.

♥ Seek professional help.

♥ Change your home's environment .

♥ Accept help.

♥ Memorialize your child.

♥ Hang a stocking.

♥ Light a special candle.

♥ Say a prayer, blessing or toast at the start of the family meal or gathering mentioning your

precious child and if appropriate, offering other thanks for their support.

- ☛ Purchase a special flower, plant, tree or wreath for your home, holiday table, church/synagogue, memorial service or cemetery.
- ☛ Decorate your child's grave or special area.
- ☛ Send holiday cards and include information about your child.
- ☛ Purchase or make a special ornament.
- ☛ Attend a remembrance ceremony.
- ☛ Write a letter, a song or poem to your child telling him/her how much you love and miss them.
- ☛ Keep a journal.
- ☛ Take pictures of everything you do to remember your child. The pictures become a part of your child's keepsakes.
- ☛ Give someone who has helped you a gift or special card.
- ☛ Create and maintain a new ritual or tradition ~ whatever that feels right.
- ☛ Make a donation to a special cause or organization that has helped you in memory of your child.
- ☛ Understand that there is no right or wrong way to deal with the holidays, anniversary dates, birth dates, etc. You have to do what feels right to you, regardless of others personal feelings.

**Take Care of Yourself** You may feel emotionally exhausted, stressed, weak, fragile, helpless, or like a failure. Taking care of yourself physically and emotionally will help. If you don't no one else will.

**Anticipation** As with many things, anticipation is worse than the actual event. Take your time and be gentle with yourself.

--©Diana Sundwall

## How Many Stockings Shall I Hang?



What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think. For days I worried. And finally I hung three upon the fireplace wall, and laid one gently on the mantel. But that was last year! And this year I shall hang all 4 above the fireplace. For it does not really matter whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or my youngest son is dead, these are my children – our family – and as long as we hang the Christmas

stockings, we shall hang them all ... with love.

-- Shirley Melin

## Preparing Is the Hardest Part

By the time Christmas Day arrives we have had the hardest part of the holiday season. Actually, by the time the day arrives the hard work is almost finished.

Even before our child died we frequently felt let down on Christmas Day. Many times the day didn't turn out to be as enjoyable as we had anticipated. Could it be that before our child died the real joy of Christmas was not in the day itself, but in the shopping, planning, and preparing that went on for weeks before? Could it also be that now the pain is in that same shopping, planning, and preparing?

Before Arthur died I so enjoyed the holidays. The excitement in the little ones' eyes, the secrets the older children shared with each other, choosing just the right gift for each brother and sister, putting up the tree, decorating, and party planning, all created excitement and happiness. How painful these same activities were after he died.

The real torment of the holidays is in the preparations. Shopping for other children and family members is hard when we can't buy for our child. Just the right sweater or that special toy screams at us in the stores. His favorite Christmas song seems to be played over and over again on the radio. You don't want to bake her favorite cookies, but you have to because the rest of the family loves them, too. As you pull out the decorations that have been packed away since last year, the first one you find is the scruffy but beautiful wreath he made in kindergarten. Every day of the week, everywhere you turn, there are reminders that he/she isn't going to be here this Christmas.

Most of us have to go through the actions to make the holidays good for the rest of the family. But in these preparations is the pain, it is the loss of the very thing that caused us joy before - our child and his/her presence - that causes us so much pain now.

Christmas day itself, outside of its significance as the birth of the Christ Child, is just another day to get through, just 24 hours like any other day. It too, will be over. So in the next few weeks when the dread of Christmas Day hits you, remind

yourself that you are doing the hardest part right now. Every day of the holiday season is painful. Ask yourself if getting through Christmas Day can be any worse than what you are "getting through" today.

--Margaret Gerner

## Dear Friend

Because I really care about you, I'm not going to pretend and wish you a merry Christmas as if nothing's happened. Instead, I'm going to reach out to you and tell you that I realize this must be a very difficult time for you.

It probably doesn't seem fair that everyone else is smiling and laughing and enjoying the holidays as usual, while your heart is aching.

There may be times a favorite carol that used to bring a smile to your face now brings tears to your eyes. You may feel confused, cheated, and even angry... and I wouldn't blame you. But rather than force yourself to fake the holiday spirit, please be honest with your emotions.

Cry, be angry, do whatever it takes to get through this... always remembering that you will get through this. Remember, too, that in time you'll be ready to celebrate Christmas again. And until then, know that there are many people whose hearts are with you, especially now... people who care about you very much and always will.

--Renee Duvall, Lakes Area Chapter, MI

## Chanukah



There are various ways that we include Johnny in our Chanukah celebrations. Some are subtle and others more overt. When we light the Menorah, we use a blue taper as the extra candle. The color blue represents Johnny to us. Just as the extra candle gives of itself to light each of the eight other candles without giving up its own light, we give Johnny and each other our love without diminishing ourselves.

After the meal and before we exchange gifts and play games, we say the Kaddish (mourners prayer). This prayer demonstrates our faith in God— despite our loss. It insists that we focus on hope rather than despair, and our determination to pass on loving memories of Johnny from generation to generation.

Shalom. -- TCF San Diego, CA



## A Beautiful Gift

During this mostly sad time for so many of us, it's nice to see when others don't just respond to those of us who grieve, but show love. It's what we need the most.

Kyle's son, Hayden, died last year from a congenital heart defect. This year will be the first Christmas without his son so he approached, Caleb Ryan Sigmon - playing Santa at a mall - with a particularly heart-breaking request: He wanted a picture of Hayden and Santa to give his wife Sasha.

Sigmon recounted the event on a facebook post: "A man walked in today holding something in his arms. 'I have a request,' he said, turning around this picture frame. 'My son passed away, last year.' He choked up and couldn't finish his sentence. The entire photo set was silent."

"I said, 'Absolutely.' Without anyone saying a thing, he handed me the frame and I placed it on my knee. In the photo I could see on the little boy's armband that his first name was Hayden. I didn't ask any questions, but I'm guessing that this was his first photo with Santa. The camera snap was the only sound I could hear in the entire mall."

"He grabbed my hand and pulled me in and hugged me, then turned around and left," Sigmon recounted. "I am sharing this to remind us all that Christmas time is unbelievably hard for some families," he concluded. "Pray for the broken hearted. Smile at people. Just be kind. Love one another."

--Valley Forge PA, TCF newsletter. Extract's from: [www.familyfriendpoems.com/poems/](http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poems/) Grieving Healing Growing Together

## My Gifts From Amy

I recently experienced the one year anniversary of my precious daughter Amy's death, a day that we as parents never want to happen. I was distressed as it really sank in that this was real and very final. Last year at this time I had been in such a state of shock that now, looking back, I began to realize the daze I was in for several months. This year I was in no such daze – the pain was all too real.

What could I do with this day? How could I make it through? In my pain I remembered one of the first things I had said when Amy died. I had expressed thankfulness for all the things she had

taught me by being in my life. As I thought of this now, I began to write down all the many things. Soon I found I was taking my list a step further and listing all the things I had learned since Amy's death. I began to see my list as a list of gifts from Amy.

Before Amy's death I had thought of myself as a religious person, going to church, believing in God, even knowing several Bible verses by heart. I was wrong. I have only now begun to see the difference in religious and spiritual. Only now, after Amy's death, have I embarked on my very own spiritual path. What greater gift could my child have left me!

I took my list and put it in a box, wrapped it up and tied it with a bow. I put the box in my closet. This time next year I will open the box and celebrate all the wonderful gifts my daughter has given me. And I'm sure I will add more as the years go by.

--Suzanne Owens



## The Roller Coaster

As a child I enjoyed the thrill of the roller coaster: gliding up the giant track, reaching the top with a momentary anticipation and the thrill of the quick dropping roll to the bottom of the track. The deep turns, first to the right and then to the left were designed to heighten the anticipation of the next climb and drop. In my childhood mind, these curves, climbs and drops were an isolated experience, temporary and fun. The ride would end.

A few months after my son's death, I dreamed of the roller coaster. But this time it wasn't fun. It was a nightmare of fear, anxiety and pain; I was so paralyzed that I couldn't breathe, that dream was the simple symbolism of life since my son died. Now I ride a different sort of roller coaster. The climb to the top is a slow, difficult rise to normalcy. The rapid descent to the bottom is yet another terrible setback. I hang onto the bar of sanity on the curves, first one way, then another. I really want to stop this ride, but it is forever. This ride won't end.

Today I recalled that roller coaster dream, in all its vivid detail, and I compare it to the roller coaster that is my life now. Are the highs lower and the lows higher? Are the curves softening? Yes, I believe they are. It's been two years and two months since Todd died. I still weep. Tiny

tears still fall unexpectedly. I still have anxiety. I still feel as if the earth has dropped from under me. I still miss talking with my son. I miss seeing him. I ache for that special hug that only my child can give. Yes, I miss my only child very much.

My heart has been shattered; my definition of myself has been altered and my loneliness is incomprehensible. But something has changed on the roller coaster of this life. That something is, of course, me. I work through my grief in many, many ways. I have consciously shifted the paradigms of my life. I have learned to evaluate people from a different perspective. I have become so sensitive to the pain of other parents that I feel it as if it were my own. I have stopped anticipating how I will handle stressful events, anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays. I have learned to keep negative energy and negative people at a far distance. I have learned that a routine provides necessary structure. I have learned to live in the moment, to take joy in simple things, to talk openly about my child's life and to acknowledge the things I cannot change.

As time move forward, I will continue to accept what is given and give what I can. I know the roller coaster will level out eventually. For as long as I live, I will keep my child with me, in my heart. That's all I can do as I ride this changing roller coaster that is now my life.

--By Annette Mennen Baldwin

## Dear Dr. Gloria,

Last night I went to my first Compassionate Friends meeting. During the sharing session I told the group that I was having trouble facing my son's mental illness and his death. For several years I have worked with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) where I learned about coping with our son's schizophrenia. I thought I had it under control. Then the call came. It was a policeman telling me Ricky was dead. He was speeding over 100 miles per hour, lost control of the car and hit a tree. It has been three months and I seem to have lost all of my coping skills. I cry often, drink too much, and obsess over what more I could have done to save our son. While Ricky was alive I worked tirelessly to help him and others cope with their mental illness and I felt we were making progress. Now as I look at his death I wonder if this was suicide by car, a last desperate effort to escape his pain. Can you help?

Sincerely, Ron



those around the table add, "May his or her memory to us be a blessing." You only compound your grief by deciding not to mention the deceased, not recalling his or her contributions to the family's memories and traditions.

Do what you can do and what feels right. --(Excerpts quoted in this newsletter with the permission from its author, Harold Ivan Smith; educator and grief counselor.)

## Seasoned Griever...

### Moving Through The Grief Of Losing A Child

I was a woman like many others - focused on my five children and family, living a quiet life on Bainbridge Island in the state of Washington. And then, in August 2004, our lives changed. That night, eight teenagers piled into an SUV and took a midnight joyride. My 16-year-old twin daughter, Sarah, was killed. The thought of losing a child--if "losing" is the correct verb-- had never crossed my mind.

Tragedies, as such, were something that happened to someone else, something you read about in the paper or heard from a neighbor. Nothing could have prepared me for the deep pain...but nothing could have prepared me for the peace that now permeates my mind and heart. The shock sets in; everything moves in slow motion as if time comes to a halt, and time has halted.

An acquaintance delivers a candle on day six with a card inscribed, "Place this candle in your kitchen. Each night while you prepare the family meal, know that the shimmering of the candle-light reflects the child who now lives within you." A lovely thought. Eight years later, I still light a candle on my kitchen windowsill. My child lives within me now.

The days turn to weeks. Friends surround you, keeping you busy, your mind occupied. Absorb their kindness. Accept their help. Eliminate expectations. Learn to be gentle with yourself. Give yourself space. Make room for quiet. Always remember that grief is personal, as is death. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve. Seek out therapy. You may be ready. Share your story and connect with others. Surround yourself with those who will listen, not necessarily those who will offer advice. For it is when others listen that we can sort out our

thoughts and settle our mind.

Your inner strength seeks you out, sometimes sooner in the process, sometimes later. That strength moves you forward--tiny steps in this process.

Let the memories fill your mind. Let yourself laugh again. Smile. Sing out when a favorite song you shared plays on the radio. Let your heart awaken to the joys memories bring. Pay attention to the synchronicity and patterns in your life. Pay attention to your intuition. And pray. It doesn't matter what you believe. Just ask, notice, and respond. Faith, hope and love all intersect. Maybe things will begin to make a little sense, just maybe.

Look to your children who live. Note their resilience and strength during this epic period of trauma. Let their sense of life and hope inspire you.

When the pain returns, and it will, allow yourself to go to the depths of that pain. Cry. I promise, you will be okay when you resurface. And as you move towards years four and five, you will learn that yes, life has been a living nightmare, and it is okay to admit that. Realize that as the years pass, you will learn to weave your loss into your daily life.

Accepting the loss of a loved one is to release, but not erase. To hold. But not to hold the pain. As year five turns towards eight, my hope is that you can slowly wrap yourself around the idea that you can celebrate life and celebrate death. Death and gratitude can go hand-in-hand. Just possibly, it is those who have passed before us who are our greatest teachers. Remember always that you never walk alone because the life of someone who passes lives on in the love you shared.

~Caroline Flohr (Provided by, and reprinted with the kind permission of, Caroline Flohr, author of Heaven's Child)



## Friends and Family...

### Shared Thoughts On Getting Through The Holidays

As we approach the holidays it is normal for our fears to become magnified. The holidays put an extra burden on us physically, financially, and emotionally, this can be an overwhelming time.

Sometimes friends and family forget the stress and depression we are coping with. It is unfair to expect the non-bereaved to understand what we

are experiencing, and to know the length of time it takes to work through our grief. Before our loss we could not fathom the depth of despair it takes to get through our anguish.

This may be a good time to be honest, and tell family and friends, "we are both physically, and emotionally drained, we plan to participate in the holidays as much as we are capable. But, that we do need understanding and to be excused from painful gatherings, so we can grieve, remember our child or sibling and heal through doing these things." When responding to invitations, it is helpful to be very open (but kind), and ask them to not pressure us to do more than we are capable of. Part of our celebration is to reminisce the beautiful time our family was all-intact and enjoying just being together. Now we face these same holidays knowing the circle will never again be complete, the intensity of it all makes us afraid. We are aware of the shattered dreams and how our future will always remain somewhat fragmented.

It is very difficult for newly bereaved to accept that it will get any better. But, those of us who have more time in our bereavement know the pain will soften, but special occasions will always tug at our emotional stability. We have also learned that those occasional tears are OK, and now that we are much stronger we can tolerate the down times, for we have much more resilience.

Frequently, we try to take on more than we can handle. It is important to not over burden ourselves for that increases our fatigue, and lowers our self-esteem when we can't fulfill our commitment. You may want to re-evaluate your traditions, and decide which ones are really important to you, and are they worth keeping?

For those of us who have been able to maintain our relationship with our Supreme Being find it helpful to concentrate on our spirituality, rather than the commercialism of the holidays. It often helps to do something to commemorate our children or sibling - a remembrance service, light a candle, buy an ornament, write notes to our loved one, visit the grave, only you and your immediate family can decide what will get you through the holidays.

It often helps to set aside some special time for our grief, to deal with our feelings, and express our love for our child or sibling in private. Remember, getting through the holidays will help us take one more step in our healing process. It is unfortunate that we have to experience this pain to

grow, and regain control of our life. Each of these hurdles helps to strengthen us, to get us through today, and into tomorrow, where we may find hope and peace. God Bless,

--Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge PA

## Welcome...



Welcome, especially to those newly bereaved who have joined us for the first time. We are sorry we had to meet under such circumstances, but we are glad you found out about us. We would like to do all we can to help you through these times. We cannot hurry you through it, or take away the pain, but we can help you understand more about what you are going through. Sometimes just knowing you are normal can be helpful. Although it may be difficult, we encourage you to attend a Compassionate Friends meeting at your nearest chapter. IT WILL HELP.



## Helpful Hint...

### Thoughts Regarding Christmas Cards and Friends

In Ann Landers, a bereaved mother from Alexandria, VA., wrote that when asked by the friends and co-workers of her daughter what they could do, she asked them to send her their thoughts about her daughter. She told them she didn't care whether those thoughts were about things her daughter had done, or how they felt about her, or some event they had shared. Just receiving their notes would give a piece of her daughter back and provide a glimpse of her life.

The mother received over 30 letters from her daughter's co-workers and friends. Now, whenever she feels depressed, she reads the letters and is comforted by how her daughter had touched others and their lives. "There are no words to express how much those letters have meant to me", she wrote.

Perhaps, in your Christmas cards, you could request the same of friends and family as their Christmas gift to you this year.

## Book Review...



*My First Christmas* by Cathie Gray. If you have ever lost a loved one or know someone that has, you will need this book in your library. With



chapters like: A Quest For A New Normal, A New Normal for Family and Friends, Men Hurt Too, and most importantly S.O.S. Saving Our Surviving-children, this is a powerfully packed wealth of information that the grieving should not be found without. Your brokenhearted sorrow filled individuals will now have a template of consolation and comfort designed to ease their anguish.

### Some Thoughts About My Journey

Some thoughts about my journey:

At first I thought...

...I would not survive her death.

At first I thought...

...I would never care about my living.

At first I thought...

...I would never have life goals (dreams) again.

At first I thought...

...the cycle of pain and numbness would never end.

At first I thought...

...I would never enjoy nature again.

At first I thought...

...I would never feel the beauty of a caring hug.

At first I thought...

...I would never love again.

I was wrong about all of these things and others.

I wish all of you the resolve and strength to continue on your path to your future.

There is a future worth living, be patient, be gentle, you will make it.

--By Allen Roth, TCF, Mason County Chapter, WA

### Holding Hands and Hearts

A mother holds her dear child's hands  
But quickly that time that holds will sever,

She holds a place within her heart

That will endure through time, forever.

Within her arms she hugs her child

Until the child will hug no more.

But in her heart remains a place

Just for that child, forevermore.

--Sascha Wagner, TCF Des Moines, IA

### Holiday Feelings

It is fitting that in this time of heightened emotional awareness, the memories about dead children assume a bittersweet priority. As our feelings of

loss and pain mingle with the celebrations, memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this festive season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles. Holiday feelings are intricate. Let it be. --Sascha



### "Twas The Night Before Christmas For Bereaved Parents"

"Twas the month before Christmas  
and I dreaded the days,

That I knew I was facing-- the holiday craze.

The stores were all filled with holiday lights,

In hopes of drawing customers by day and by night.

As others were making the holiday plans,

My heart was breaking -- I couldn't understand.

I had lost my dear child a few years before,

And I knew what my holidays had in store.

When out of nowhere, there arose such a sound,  
I sprang to my feet and was looking around.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The sight that I saw took my breath away,

And my tears turned to smiles in the light of they.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,

But a cluster of butterflies fluttering near.

With beauty and grace they performed a dance,

I knew in a moment, this wasn't by chance.

The hope that they gave me was a sign from  
above.

That my child was still near me and that I was  
loved.

The message they brought was my holiday gift.

And I cried when I saw them in spite of myself.

As I knelt closer to get a better view,

One allowed me to pet it-as if it knew that

I needed the touch of its fragile wing,

To help me get through the holiday scene.

In the days that followed, I carried the thought,

Of the message the butterflies left in my heart

That no matter what happens or what days lie  
ahead,

Our children are with us-they're not really dead.

Yes, the message of the butterflies still rings in my  
ears.

A message of hope-a message so dear.

And I imagined they sang as they flew out of sight.

"To all bereaved parents ~ We love you tonight."

--By Faye McCord - TCF, Jackson, MS



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 Alvarez

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

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

Cheianne 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 Brooks 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

Carina Chandiramani  
Born: 5/86 Died: 9/18  
Mother: Norma Chandiramani

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 Triliegi &  
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

Michelle 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

Matty Mallano  
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18  
Mother: Paula Mallano

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  
Parents: Mike & Shirley Matich  
Grandmother: Susan Matich

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

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: 11/94 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: 6/15  
Mother: Theresa Montoya

Joshua Montoya  
Born: 4/15 Died: 6/15  
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

Jeffrey Alan Rakus  
Born: 10/86 Died: 7/06  
Parents: Tony & Donna Rakus

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 Edith 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

**Our****Children****Remembered****Birthday Tributes...**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. Szcus  
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11  
Parents: Dolores & Frank  
Szcus

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

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

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, click on the link to donate online.

[www.tcsfbla.org](http://www.tcsfbla.org) )

\* 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:**

Shannon  
Quigley  
Runningbear  
12/68 - 1/09



Happy birthday dear Shannon ....this would have been your 50th ....it has been 10 years since you made your transition and we still miss and think of you every single day.... your impact on our lives will continue to fill us and bless others just as you did while you were here on earth.... Your motto was "You can do it".... you also told me that the connection IS the connection and there is nothing we need to do to make it stronger or better it just is.... thank you for continuing to send me messages and for the big love you brought to me and the

whole family....you are our heart and will forever be our star...love eternal, mom Kathleen

## For Siblings...



### Concerning Siblings

It's been said that when a child's brother or sister dies, actually three people are lost: the sibling and both parents. The sibling also loses a friend, playmate, confidant, role model, and lifelong companion. For the parents, the loss of a child is often so traumatic that they have little left to give to the surviving children. Yet the surviving sibling has fears, needs, and anxieties that must be explored and addressed if the child is to avoid negative long term consequences. Listed here are normal feelings siblings might have concerning the loss along with some suggestions on what to do to encourage their expression.

#### Normal Thoughts

- \* "Did I cause the death?"
- \* "Will the rest of my family die?"
- \* "Who will take care of me now?"
- \* "I'm all alone now."
- \* "Half of me died."
- \* "I'm different from all the other kids."
- \* "I'm not a child anymore."
- \* "I feel left out."
- \* "Things will never be the same again."
- \* "No one cares about my grief, only about my parents grief."
- \* "I can't cry because it will make my parents more upset."
- \* "I feel guilty to be happy or to laugh."
- \* "Why wasn't it me?"
- \* "Will I die young too?"
- \* "I made it happen by wishing him dead!"
- \* "If I act like my sibling, maybe my parents will feel better."
- \* "Maybe my parents would love me more if I died!"

#### Normal Feelings

- \* Impatient and angry at the world.
- \* Resentful over the attention the parents are getting.
- \* Resentful over the attention they are not getting.
- \* Fearful of having to replace the sibling.
- \* Guilt for feeling relieved over the death after a long illness.
- \* Guilt over all the "bad" thoughts, words, and

fight with the deceased.

#### How To Help

- \* The bereaved parents should constantly remind themselves to be sensitive to the feelings of the surviving children.
- \* The parents should strive to maintain as much of a normal routine as possible for the survivors.
- \* The parents should encourage grieving, openness and the expression of feelings in the children by grieving openly and expressively in front of them.
- \* Reassure them that they are not going to die, too.
- \* Reassure them that they are loved, wanted and okay.
- \* Reassure them that they did not cause the death in any way.
- \* Give lots of physical reassurance in the way of touching and hugs.
- \* Contact the teacher/teachers or school counselors.
- \* Ask them what and how they would like the school to be told.
- \* Prepare them for questions and remarks they can expect at school.
- \* Encourage them to resume their normal activities at their own pace.
- \* Remember the sibling's birthday and anniversary of the death.
- \* Remember the sibling at special family gatherings and functions.
- \* Don't be afraid to talk about the child that died.
- \* Talk about all the qualities of the child that died positive and negative.
- \* Talk about the differences between the siblings—good and bad.
- \* Don't promise them a replacement sibling with talks of having another child.
- \* Remember surviving siblings cannot become, or replace, the deceased – brother or sister.

--Buz Overbeck – Joanie Overbeck

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Adapted From: Helping Children Cope With Loss

### To All Siblings...

Be guided by the reality that there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays after your sibling died. Do what you need to do to get

yourself through the holidays. We grieve differently than our parents do. Yes, we need to respect their grief, but we need to remember ours. Our siblings would want us to laugh and sing along with the Christmas carols, but we just may not be ready yet. Guilt? Oh, yes, we will feel that this holiday season. But we may also celebrate their lives in our own special way. Whatever you choose to do, do what's good for you.

Everyone is at a different stage in their grief. The holidays make the reality of loss even harder. I hope this holiday season you can find peace and love in memories. Please know you are not alone.  
-- Vera, Sara's sister, TCF, Kansas City, MO

### Christmas Love

It is Christmas time once again  
as the snow falls from the sky.  
I hear the angels singing their songs  
yet I ask myself why?

How can everyone be so happy  
when tears drop from my eye.

And I ask the angels over again  
why did my brother die.

I believe he is in a beautiful place  
and singing right along.

For he loved the Christmas season  
and the sounds of Christmas songs.

As I sit here listening to the angels sing  
I think I hear his voice.

I believe that he is telling me  
to smile and rejoice.

Now as I look to future Christmases  
there will be so very many.

But my heart will always smile and sing  
because "I love you Denny".

-- Kimberly Kearns Minetola  
TCF - Valley Forge, PA



### For Grandparents...



### To Bereaved Grandparents Concerning the Holidays:

1. Know that your grief over the loss of your grandchild is legitimate. You have the need and right to grieve.
2. Learn about the grief process, not only so you will know what you are experiencing is normal but

it will help you know that your grieving child is not "going crazy."

3. Find someone with whom you can share your thoughts and feelings about your grandchild's death.

4. Know that the holidays will be difficult for you, as well as your grieving child. Don't expect too much of yourself this year.

5. Your grieving child will be especially needy of you this year. Find ways to include memories and/or memorabilia of the dead child in your family ritual. You may even want to change some of your traditional holiday plans this year.

6. Know that your children who have not lost a child may be uncomfortable with whatever you do, but explain to them how necessary it is for your grieving child.

7. Know that however you plan this year's holiday arrangements it will not be as it has been in the past. The holidays will never be the same because your grandchild will never be there again. Know too that it does get easier as the years go by.

8. Take this opportunity to cement a very special relationship with your grieving child by being sensitive to their needs during this holiday season.

--Margaret Gerner, M.S.W. TCF, St. Louis MO

### In My Child's Memory I Can...

Room mother, coach, scout leader, etc. the list is endless when you have children. We volunteer to help, because help is needed, our children are proud when we help, and we feel good about ourselves when we help. Well...TCF needs the same commitment. Much of our healing comes from helping others. By year-end donations and volunteering to help, you ensure that the chapter will continue to flourish and be there for the other bereaved parents in the future.

I know it can seem daunting and you may be nervous to agree to help out during this difficult time, but you will be helping us help others. Remember when you didn't know if you could even sit through a meeting? Remember how much it helped when someone else expressed the same crazy thoughts you were having but were to afraid to voice? Remember how helpful and reassuring it was to come to a meeting and be among others who truly understood the depths of your pain. Well, now that your pain has lessened, we really could use your help. Please volunteer to

help keep our chapter running and to be here for all the other bereaved families who are going to need us.

Please don't feel you can't do a good job or someone else could do it better. You don't need experience to fulfill any of the positions... you already have the experience of being a bereaved parent. You get it! You know what helped you. Now, you can muddle through just about anything, all you have to do is try. Besides, who in TCF would sit in judgement. We all are here to help each other. Please find the courage to reach out and help our chapter. Call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 and leave a message.

It's about giving back...Now it is your turn. Please put your fears away and volunteer to help in one of the following positions that keep our chapter running. We will help you until you feel comfortable in your new role. You can do it, after all, you've already survived the worst pain possible. Volunteer in memory of your wonderful child. Do it for your Compassionate Friends. Everyone will benefit from your help.

The following positions are needing YOU!

**GREETERS:** Arrives at meetings early to meet, greet, and seat new members; assists with name tags and sign-in.

**OUTREACH:** Helps publicize TCF so the community knows we are here. Displays information at health fairs, mortuaries and libraries.

**PUBLICITY:** Notifies newspapers of upcoming events and support meetings; assists outreach; mails press releases. — Looking for assistant

**CARDS:** Sends Birthday and Anniversary cards to newly bereaved members

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Members who meet quarterly to give their ideas for meetings, topics, guest speakers, and agendas.

**DONATIONS:** The Compassionate Friends is funded solely through donations. Your gifts allow our chapter to print and mail the newsletter, purchase brochures to distribute and to cover the many expenses to support grieving families in our community. Any amount you donate will help our chapter with operating costs, and is tax deductible. You can mail in your donation or go to

[www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.org) and click on the donate button to do it electronically.

Please stop and think about what TCF has

done for you. We need your help in reaching out to the many new parents that are going to need us. You can help by getting involved and being a part of keeping our chapter functioning. Please do your part to help keep the organization going... to be there for those new families who will need us is... It is all about giving back.

## From Our Members...



## New TCF Beach Cities/L.A. Chapter Started in Manhattan Beach...

Kristen Day who has attended some of our meetings and last year's candle lighting has started a new TCF chapter in Manhattan Beach. Their meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the month. It is located at the Manhattan Beach Community Church on Artesia and Peck. The meeting will start at 7:00 P.M.

## Our Wishes For You

To those of you whose pain is fresh and raw, and still have courage to come and share with us, and give us healing through your pain, we send you love and compassion.

To those of you whose pain of grief, anger, and frustration has begun to soften, we wish you hope and healing.

To those of you who have found life can be good again, and can tenderly remember your child tinged with much less sorrow, and not be overwhelmed, we wish you fond memories, and a meaningful holiday.

To those of you who are struggling in your marriage or relationship, we wish you patience and understand to accept one another for what you can give.

To those of you who are struggling with your spirituality, we wish you peace.

To those of you who give words of comfort and hope to another in the depth of despair, we say "Thank You"

We send you love, hope, compassion, a hug, and  
wish you peace.

–Marie and Ken Kofmockell

## Holidays in Heaven

The Holiday Season is just not the same,  
A smile is missing when saying one name.  
For parents who've lost a daughter or son,  
Nothing can bring back the delightful fun,  
Of watching them talk, laugh, or just run.  
The memories are all that we do have now,  
We do go on.....only God knows how.  
A New Year comes as midnight arrives,  
Our Angels still a big part of our lives.  
If only we could trade the presents we receive,  
For one more day with those whom we grieve!  
But nothing can bring back our beloved child,  
The one that laughed, cried, and often smiled.  
They are together in a much better place,  
Watching us cry.....touching our face!  
Although we miss them on Holidays to share,  
Be assured their loving presence fills the air,  
At home, in church, at New York's Times Square!  
So celebrating the Holidays are now hard to do,  
But always remember they are thinking of you too.  
Wishing you happiness and showing their love,  
Not on this Earth, but from Heaven above!  
--Dan Bryl, Lawrenceville, GA TCF  
Submitted by Linda Curtis

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

**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.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Dec. 1st for Jan. 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 your 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](mailto: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

**Beach Cities/L.A.** (Manhattan Beach): (970) 213-6293. Third Tues

**Los Angeles:** (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.

**Newport Beach** (917) 703-3414 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org) (310) 483-8313.

#### Other Grief Support Websites...

<a href="http://agast.org">agast.org</a> (for grandparents)	<a href="http://groww.com">groww.com</a>
<a href="http://goodgriefresources.com">goodgriefresources.com</a>	<a href="http://childloss.com">childloss.com</a>
<a href="http://beyondindogp.com">beyondindogp.com</a>	<a href="http://griefwatch.dom">griefwatch.dom</a>
<a href="http://angelmoms.com">angelmoms.com</a>	<a href="http://babysteps.com">babysteps.com</a>
<a href="http://healingafterloss.org">healingafterloss.org</a>	<a href="http://webhealing.com">webhealing.com</a>

[survivorsofselfharm.com](http://survivorsofselfharm.com)  
[taps.org](http://taps.org) (military death)  
[bereavedparentsusa.org](http://bereavedparentsusa.org)  
[pomc.com](http://pomc.com) (families of murder victims)  
[grasphelp.org](http://grasphelp.org) (substance abuse deaths)  
[www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub](http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub) (Suicide)

[opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)  
[alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)  
[save.org](http://save.org)

### 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 <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](http://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](http://www.health.voiceamerica.com).

### Save the Date



for the 42nd TCF National Conference in Philadelphia, PA with the theme, "Hope Rings in Philadelphia". Watch for the latest information on the 2019 national website.

# 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 tax deductible donation is what keeps our chapter going. If you want the ease 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.tcsbla.org](http://www.tcsbla.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 Eric Vines and all of our children who are gone too soon. May their memories sustain you in the holiday season. "The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we remember, and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey." This quote by Harriet Schiff, author of The Bereaved Parent is all too true. Please join me in giving the gift of a donation in memory of your precious child.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

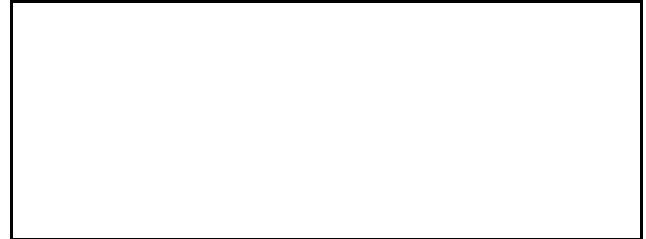
To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month or it will appear in the following issue.

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

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– Return Service Requested –



**December 2018**

## **Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly**



### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

We are young, and we are old.

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

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,  
while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,  
while others radiate an inner peace.

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

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

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

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*If you no longer wish to receive this mailing or have a new address, please contact us.*