



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

JULY 2019 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be July 11th, the ☆ **SECOND** ☆  
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 July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting is a holiday so we will be meeting on Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup> instead.☆☆  
The meeting will start with "Grieving and Summer"

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.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510-1171  
(310) 963-4646  
[www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.org)

Chapter Co-Leaders:  
Linda Zelik (310) 370-1645  
[Linzelik@gmail.com](mailto:Linzelik@gmail.com)

Co-leader needed

The National Office of TCF  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696  
Toll free (877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

☆☆**The Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting is postponed due to the holiday. We will meet in our regular room at the Neighborhood Church on Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup> instead.** ☆☆ The meeting will start with "Grieving and Summer."

Summertime is here and you may be feeling a host of emotions. Vacations, friends and family getting together for bar-b-ques, simple outings, kids everywhere, and your child is dead. It isn't fair. Our children should be here enjoying summer and all it entails. You should be enjoying it too, but grief invades your every thought. Vacations can be wonderful and they can be a problem. You need to remember you cannot really leave grief at home...It will go with you. Plan for it and pack for it. Simple get togethers are tinged with sadness. That doesn't mean you should hide out and not enjoy the summer. When Grieving, bereaved families need a respite from the hard work of grief.

This meeting will start with sharing ways we have learned to plan for vacations and other summer activities. As always, the topic will just be a way to start the meeting, so bring your input and see where the meeting goes.

## Grief and Your Vacation



Vacation time can be especially painful for us because there is more time to think than when we are caught up with the normal demands of every-day living. If you have recently suffered the death of a child, it is important to remember this when planning your vacation. Here are some suggestions:

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

Plan to do some grief work because you will—planned or not. Give yourself the freedom to change your plans if you have a bad day."

Know that your child will be on your mind just as if you were at home.

If you visit friends or relatives, remember that they mean well, even when their remarks seem insensitive.

If you have surviving children and they come with you, plan some activities especially for them. Remember that vacation time is difficult for them too.

If you have a spouse, make sure that the vacation plans are suitable for both of you. Remember that, although you both grieve for the same child, you grieve differently and may have different needs away from home.

Allow yourself to enjoy the vacation. You are not being disloyal to your dead child if you do.

Going away and coming home can be especially difficult for the newly bereaved. Know that this is normal, but keep in mind that it will be better in time.

—Based in part on an article by Ann Baklarz  
TCF, Pittsburgh, PA

## Letter from the Editor

Summer! Time for a little relaxing, and vacations. Yes, vacations. Are you ready? I don't mean have you made hotel reservations or packed a suitcase. I mean are you ready to allow yourself to have a vacation. To the newer bereaved parent, this would feel like a betrayal to the loss they are feeling, a betrayal to their beloved child. The mere thought of smiling, much less laughing and feeling happy would be a sacrilege. And yet, there does come a time when this will change. We cannot know in advance when it will happen, there is no timetable for grief.

This grief journey is one you must travel now. In the beginning, it can feel like crossing an ocean without a compass on a dark night with no stars to guide you. I, myself, have absolutely no sense of direction, so when I began my journey, I was completely lost at sea. Over the past 5 years, I've begun to notice the stars, one by one, leading me... somewhere.

Our grief journey could also be compared to taking a road trip vacation to a new place, before there was radar, mapquest or GPS systems. We had to take a paper map, complicated and cumbersome, at best. We could not refer to them while behind the wheel. We would read the map and start out. Then came a fork in the road. Right or left? Make a choice and realize miles later, we were wrong. So back we go and start over. And this is how we traveled, over and over again. Sometimes we had a traveling companion who could help guide us. We had to trust they could read a map or we could end up going in circles. Who among the bereaved can say this isn't how our journey feels. Starts and stops and getting

lost. There are guard rails along the side of the road, we may, now and then, scrape them. It's okay, we won't crash or fall off.

So, when will you be ready to allow yourself to start the journey and for those a little farther along, when do we allow ourselves to begin to enjoy the scenery again? It's all still out there, waiting to be noticed. Sooner or later, you will let yourself listen to the radio in the car again, and one day you'll realize you've begun to sing along with a favorite song, maybe one your child loved to sing loudly in the shower. You may even cry a little, that's okay, too. Smile through your tears, let your heart and mind embrace the world again. Then, one day, you may decide to even make a hotel reservation, pack a bag and step away from your grief, for a few days, or a week or two.

I know at first, this sounds like heresy, but, truly it's possible. About 18 months after Kira died, my aunt, whose husband had died 2 months after Kira, wanted to get away. She invited me to accompany her on a 10 day cruise. I was torn between my own grief and my need to help my aunt through hers. So I went... out to that sea.

The stars were out, there was a captain who knew where he was going. I was along for the ride. Some nights I cried in my pillow, knowing Kira would never be able to have a trip like this. Every evening my aunt and I went to the piano bar for a cocktail. Before I sat down, I asked the piano player to play a song for me – and for Kira, knowing I was the only one who knew I was sending this message to her. Never once in 10 days did I forget her, but I was still able to be company for my aunt and even feel some enjoyment of the trip itself. Sure, I knew once I got home, my grief would still be there on the shelf, Kira looking back at me in a photo. I knew I had not “gotten over it”. I knew the daily struggle and sadness would always be there for me. All this, and yet I allowed myself this little break, this vacation.

It takes some courage and strength, and love, to be able to take a vacation after losing a child. Maybe not for a year or two, or five, however, one day you start to pack a bag. Take sun screen, not guilt with you. Let yourself hear the music of life again. Your child will be in your heart listening with you.

--TCF of Potomac, MD



## First Anniversary

When a bolt of lightning took the life of my son, Curtis, my life changed forever. The first winter after the loss was the darkest period of my life. In my misery I'd often daydream of sitting on a warm, sandy beach, watching the waves roll in. I believed this might bring some peace to my aching heart.

At last, winter turned to spring and then summer. For many weeks I dreaded the coming of the first anniversary, July 24th, but knew I wanted to spend the day by the water. My husband and I made plans to travel to Bayfield County, Wisconsin. The 24th was a beautiful, sunny day when we arrived on the shores of Lake Superior. As we set up our chairs in a shady spot on the beach, we looked around at the many families surrounding us. Parents were relaxing as their children played in the sand and water. Tears ran down our cheeks as we watched and remembered Curt and his sister, Pam, doing the same thing as youngsters. The memories were hard to bear– this wasn't the soothing, peace-filled day that I had hoped for. As we left the beach, I wondered if people noticed my tear-streaked face.

The next evening we traveled to a different, more secluded beach. The sun setting over the water was a beautiful sight, and the photo I took is one I love to look at, especially in the cold winter months.

Bayfield County is known for its many orchards. The sweet cherries and blueberries were ready for picking, so we decided to take advantage of the opportunity. For several hours we worked side by side, first picking the cherries from low-hanging branches, and then kneeling to pick the loaded blueberry bushes. We talked as we worked, occasionally sampling the delicious fruit, and surprisingly, even laughing. For short periods of time we were able to put aside the sadness and enjoy the moment.

When we arrived back home, the “anniversary” cards and messages waiting for us from thoughtful friends touched our hearts. We took great pleasure in sharing our fruit with family and friends.

As the 4th anniversary of Curt's passing approaches, I look back and see the progress I've made. The grief process is exasperatingly slow.

Healing doesn't magically happen with the passage of time, but requires lots of hard work and patience.

My journey through grief continues, and sometimes I question if it will ever end. However, I do know that the crushing sorrow I once felt no longer rules my life. I've done what I thought was impossible—I've survived the loss of my precious son and have become a more caring, compassionate person because of it. I know that I must live for today, appreciating the beauty and surprises that each day brings. I will do the best I can because this is what my son would want.

--Ruth Ann Meyer TCF ~ Greater Antigo Area, WI  
In loving memory of my son, Curtis

### Crying Over Spilled Shampoo

A few sort months after the death of my son, Luke, I was showering with anticipation of washing my hair with a new coconut-scented shampoo that I just purchased a few days earlier. I lifted the bottle and let the shampoo spill into my hands. As I closed my eyes, the scent pulled me back in time, to the beach, and the unexpected memory of coconut oil -- back to a time of Luke's childhood.

The scent of that shampoo overflowed into all of my senses. For just a moment, I was back on the beach rubbing coconut oil on my little boy and I could see his beautiful dark skin, feel the warmth of his tiny hands, hear his familiar voice smell the wonderful scent of coconut oil. Once again, I could taste the salty ocean.

Then, I opened my eyes and, in an instant, I was drawn back into reality. It was then that I realized that the dark skin that I saw was only the back of my eyelids, the hands that I felt were my own..the voice I heard was the sound of the water trickling on my head from the shower, the smell of the coconut oil was my new shampoo, and the salty ocean was simply the taste of my very own tears.

-- Christine Ross, In Loving Memory of Lucas Christopher Ross 1979 - 2001

### His Room

I now stand in the midst of "His Room". Once again, I reached and touched all of the "little things" he treasured so dearly each day, yet which had neither meaning nor value to anyone else.

And as I stood there, I wanted to visualize, once again, times as they used to be— only a very short time ago. I yearned once again to hear his voice, his music, and to feel his presence within me.

I glimpsed at the many pictures he had placed upon the walls, each relaying to me some small story that had entered his life. I listened for the familiar voices of his many friends who were always here in abundance each and every day with him, in this very room— but heard only the vibrations of silence.

I reflected upon, all of the precious moments we had for our "little talks about life" and all of the "momentous problems" that were generally solved in a matter of minutes. When I used to walk away from this very room, a smile would always rise within me at how fortunate I was at that very moment to have him— his innocence was always so overwhelming.

And as I stand here, I wonder how many other fathers at this very moment in time are standing in their "beloved room of memories" as I am now! How many other fathers are also cherishing what I have within me? Finally, how many times each day did I hear his voice call to me from this very room, "Dad, I love you, See you later!"

Yes, my son, Mom and Dad will see you later!  
--Dick Gallager TCF, Central CT



### My Secret

Within days of my son's tragic death helicopter crash, it became my sad duty to remove his belongings from his apartment. In the numbing fog of shock and denial, I sifted through every drawer, cabinet, and closet. The wrenching decisions of what to with his clothes, his video tapes—even his toothbrush—made my head swim.

Although I gave away many of the things to his roommate, other friends and family, and to "Goodwill," I kept the "special" things for myself—school yearbooks, pictures, certain articles of clothing, and his collection of crazy T-shirts. I put this strange assortment of things in his footlocker, a remnant of his boarding school days.

What I didn't tell anyone was that I never laundered the T-shirts I found in the dirty clothes hamper. I just folded them and put them in the



footlocker with my other memories. And from time to time during those first months of agonizing pain, I would sit on the floor, open the footlocker and sort through the treasured remnants of a life that had been such a large part of mine.

Then I would take the unwashed T-shirts and bury my face in them, inhaling the combined scents of his cologne, deodorant, and perspiration, mixed with the wetness of my tears. It made me feel, for just moment that he wasn't really so far away. "What a perverse thing to do!" I thought. I'm sure no one else would understand my doing such a thing—they would surely think I'd gone off the deep end. So I never told anyone about this strange behavior—and the odd comfort it gave to me.

Months later at a National Conference, I heard a speaker tell hundreds of bereaved parents assembled about a mother whose son had died suddenly and how she had refused to wash the soiled shirt he had been wearing, but found comfort in holding it close to her and smelling it. "My gosh," I thought, "maybe I'm not so crazy after all."

Since this experience I have discovered this is not as uncommon as I had once thought. The scents of a loved one are as much a part of them as the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, or the tenderness of a kiss. There is nothing "perverse" in wanting to cling to these precious memories. Memories are what remain after the death of our child and there is comfort to be found in them.

--Carole Ragland TCF Houston-West Chapter, TX

## The Harvest Of Your Grief Work

"It isn't right! I go a month sometimes and don't cry. I actually get involved in something, and don't think about my daughter for hours. I had fun at the company picnic last week."

"I feel so guilty. Am I forgetting my daughter?"

This mother was 2 years into her grief. She was doing good grief-work – leaning into the pain, talking out feelings, expressing emotions and attending Bereaved Parents meetings regularly. And she was hurting less.

When parents begin to reap the harvest of their grief-work well done, they sometimes feel they are losing their children.

The truth is: They are just reaping the harvest of their grief-work done well.

In the first couple of years, pain ties us to our children. During that time, we equate pain with love. By the time we are beginning to resolve our grief (and that is what is happening) pain has been our companion for so long that we feel lost without it.

This is one of the few places in grief where our mind needs to take over for awhile. We need to look at the illogic of prolonged grieving. We need to see that we are beginning to reach the goal we hoped some day to reach.

Self-talk can help as rid ourselves of this illogical emotion. Ask yourself:

...If you believe that to keep your child in your heart for the rest of your life, you must hang onto the pain.

...Will your prolonged misery make your child less dead?

...Does the fact that your child is dead mean that you must die also?

...Does your prolonged misery accomplish anything? What purpose does it serve?

...Will hanging onto your pain make you grow and change, or will it make you unhappy and bitter?

...What effect will your prolonged grief have on your marriage and/or surviving children?

...Do you really want to stay in the pit indefinitely?

...Will your continuing grief honor your child?

These questions can help you see that beginning grief resolution is as healthy and normal after a couple of years as allowing yourself to enter fully into your grief in the early months after your child has died.

Rethink your reactions. Let yourself get to the other side of your grief. Let yourself appreciate the peace and comfort that is beginning to be yours. Most importantly, let yourself feel the joy of remembering your child without the deep, searing, pain you have felt for so long.

--Margaret Gerner, St. Louis MO

## Grief Is Not Quicksand

Often, a survivor fears that if he shows his sadness, there will be no end to it. If you are among those who feel that you do not know how intense, lengthy or deep your expression of grief may be, you may find yourself thinking that it would be impossible—or at least very difficult—for you to pull out of grief's deep pit to do all the things you need to do before or after the death.

Being afraid of getting sucked down into a



hollow of "no return" is not realistic. Grief is not quicksand. Rather, it is a walk on rocky terrain that eventually smooths out and provides less challenge—both emotionally and physically. For example, you may think: I will fall apart and won't be able to function if I start to show how I feel. Replace such thoughts with the more realistic: I will let go for a time, release what I feel, and will be able to function better as a result of having vented the feelings that are an ever-present burden.

--Carol Staudacher

### 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

Dear Ron,

I am very sorry to hear about Ricky's death, but I am glad you found The Compassionate Friends and I hope you will continue to attend meetings and visit their Internet Chat Rooms. NAMI is a wonderful organization and it sounds like you found that making sense of any loss is made easier by giving service. Three months is very early and I suggest that the service you need to give at this time is to yourself.

The first year following the death is the most difficult as you have to go through the first of everything without him. Be patient with yourself. Crying is part of the process; I often hear men say that they wish they could cry more.

Obsessive thoughts of how you could have made a difference are natural. Journaling, sharing

feelings and getting light exercise are good ways to calm these thoughts and settle your mind. You should avoid drinking excessively and self-medicating as they dampen emotions making it difficult to face the reality of your loss. As time passes the questions of how and why he died will take on less importance, as in the end it is not how Ricky died, but how he lived and the memories of him that make you smile and rekindle your love. Also, please visit us at [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com).

God Bless, Dr. Gloria

Dr. Gloria Horsley, MFC, CNS, PhD, is the founder and president of the Open to Hope Foundation an internationally known grief expert, a psychotherapist, and bereaved parent. Gloria co-hosts the Internet radio show Open to Hope, at [www.opentohope.com](http://www.opentohope.com), and has authored a number of books and articles. She will be answering your questions related to loss, grief, and recovery for the bereaved parent/grandparent.

Please send your questions to: Dr. Gloria Horsley, c/o The Compassionate Friends, PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696



### Flying a Kite

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child. I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kits aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky.

Kites are fun. Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman.

Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites. In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one half months old. I

never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died.

Immediately after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nausea, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.

--Daniel Max Rask New Haven, CT  
In Memory of my son, Max Benjamin Rask

## Newly Bereaved...

### Take The Time . . . To Hurt, To Cry. . .

"Wordless and worldliness -- Endless and forever, Grief goes on -- It takes the best -- And leaves the rest an empty shell -- Life is Hell."

David was dead four months when I wrote that in my journal. Time is my enemy. As I envisioned the future of my life, I saw only a vast expanse of desert - dry, parched, and empty.

It is now a year and a half since David's death, and I recognize that time has become my friend. Now, when I look to the future, I see hills and valleys - struggles, to be sure, but, also, moments spent at the summit. What has happened? Time is healing.

#### Take the time . . .

To hurt . . . The pain is great and the temptation to run away is great. But, there is no avoiding, no escaping the hard feelings. If you cover them over, they only re-surface later in a potentially more destructive way.

To cry . . . It may feel like once started, you

can never stop. But you have every reason to cry, and when you have cried enough, you will stop.

To "fall apart." . . . If you have a broken leg, you would not expect yourself to function at full capacity right away. Your wound is much greater - you have a broken heart. Confusion, inability to concentrate, lethargy, imagined glimpses of your dead child are a normal part of the grieving process and do not mean that you are going crazy.

To be "selfish." . . . Mourning is an egocentric time, a time for turning inward and introspection.

To "identify" . . . and seek out resources in your environment that can help: friends, clergy, Compassionate Friends, a counselor. Talk to them.

Having done all that - having lingered in the valley of the shadow - it is time to begin the climb out.

#### Take the time . . .

To engage again in activities that were once pleasurable. They may hold no joy the first few times; someday they will and that will be all right.

To laugh without guilt. Savor the good moments in the day, brief though they may be. Through your child, you can re-discover the beauty of a sunset.

To care for your health. Grieving is a physio-, as well, as psycho-logical stress. Your body needs protection.

To be patient. Wanting to live again and learning to live again takes time. The path out of the other side of the valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with time - time spent doing the work of grief - you can find the path to a world made richer by your love.

--Bronna Romaoff, PHD - Albany, NY, TCF

## Seasoned Greivers...

### The Paths to Peace



As bereaved parents, we look to others for answers about our grief journey. For eight years I have listened as so many parents spoke about the combination of factors which brought peace to their hearts and allowed them to move forward into a different, less painful, life. I have read books, watched movies, attended seminars and retreats. I have gone to 93 Compassionate



Friends meetings. And I have discovered one key factor in finding peace and resolution on this terrible grief journey: there is no single element or singular combination of elements that answers the needs of more than one parent. Each parent must patiently seek those elements that will enhance the individual and a unique personal journey: there is no magic map to finding the path to peace.

There is one common denominator in this quest for the peace on our long journey, and that is patience. Patience with ourselves is mandatory, because the grief journey after the death of our precious child is so horrible, so painful, and so isolating that our psyches and our bodies take so very much time to begin the healing process. There are setbacks. There is progress. Each of these comes in spurts. Each is partially reversed and the process begins anew.

Friends and family do not thoroughly understand our perspective on our unique journey. We must make allowances for them. But we must ask that allowances be made for us. For we are finding ourselves while on a path that we did not choose. We are lost. We are weakened. We are heartbroken. Each of us in our own way is seeking the formula that is uniquely our own.

Some parents find a kind of peace in their religion. Some parents are angry with their God. Many parents seek private counseling. Other parents read prolifically about the grief journey, seeking some element which resonates with them.

Many parents come to Compassionate Friends meetings and actively participate. Others attend meetings and say little. Some parents slip into denial and proceed on the old path of their lives. We each make choices. We are different people with different experiences, backgrounds, cultures, genetic hard wiring, education and combination of abilities.

The path to peace is found by searching, by reaching out to every resource available. We will reject much of what we find; but if we search, we will find what we need.

For many of us, finding other bereaved parents presents an opportunity to listen to the stories of their child and their journey and, within those stories, we find many threads that fit our unique journey. Many stories, many journeys, many new threads are shared in group discussion and in private discussions.

We find "seasoned" grievers who provide perspective on our feelings, and listen to our story.

We find newly bereaved parents who touch our hearts and remind us how we have built our path to peace brick by brick. Their pain brings reflection and new revelations about our own grief journey.

I found kindred souls at Compassionate Friends. These kindred souls have allowed me to explore the various aspects of my being and gradually create a path of peace for myself. But the journey does not suddenly end. We walk this path for the rest of our lives. And if we do the hard work and face our demons early on, we accept the unacceptable and face life on our own terms. And that is as it should be.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin, In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF ~ Katy, TX

## Friends and Family...

### How Can Anyone Expect Me To Be Who I Was Before .....



If you know what I have been through, and you said "I can't even imagine"  
 If you took time to go to the service, and you said "Call me if you need anything"  
 If you sent a card or brought a cassarole  
 If you called a handful of times for a couple of months  
 If you went home and thanked God for your family  
 If you said a prayer for me or even shed a tear  
 How could you ever say you miss the person I used to be?  
 Don't you think I do too?  
 If you never lost a child, be it yours or a grand, a brother or a sister  
 If you never had to kiss your cold child goodbye for the last time  
 If you never had to pack up their things to never be used again  
 If you never had to make phone calls to notify people of your great loss  
 If you never had to cry yourself to sleep while living in a nightmare  
 If you never had to watch your family fall apart knowing there was nothing you could do  
 If you never had to read an autopsy or place an obituary  
 How could you ever think I could go back to how I was?



Don't you know that I would if I could.  
 If you went back to work a week after my loss  
 If you went on a vacation or sang in the shower  
 within the next year  
 If you went grocery shopping and did not  
 breakdown sobbing uncontrollably  
 If you look forward to the holidays  
 If you don't fear listening to the radio  
 If you do not envy all other families around you  
 If you don't live life divided in before and after  
 If you can't feel the real and constant ache in your  
 chest  
 How could you ever expect me to move on?  
 And where do you want me to go without my  
 child?  
 If you don't speak of my child  
 If you go on as normal like nothing happened  
 If you talk in front of me of things about your  
 children  
 If you take family pictures and your child is not  
 missing  
 If you don't have an Angelversary on your  
 calendar with your child's name  
 If you don't fight back the tears at family  
 gatherings amongst all the laughter and joy  
 If you never said "I wonder what my child would  
 look like and what they would be doing"  
 If you never think about being reunited away from  
 this earth  
 If you have had one day that you didn't cry or  
 scream the word "Why"  
 How could you understand or even have a clue of  
 what I go through?  
 And why would you think that it could be so easy  
 to do?  
 To act like my life was not shattered and torn in  
 two!  
 If I could I would make it better for you  
 The person I used to be died with my child and left  
 me with the shell that you recognize  
 And I am trying to build another version of myself  
 But it is so hard to do when you only want the old  
 me and who I used to be  
 So please don't ask the impossible and please be  
 patient  
 I have never had to do this, and I hope you never  
 have to too  
 Don't wait for me to be who I was before, that  
 person had their child, and I can't make it like that  
 now or evermore

--Ruth Harris

© 7/20/2018



## Welcome...

We recognize that it takes great  
 courage to come to the first meeting, whether you  
 are a bereaved parent, sibling or grandparent of  
 one month or many years. You are welcome to  
 bring a friend or relative for moral support if you  
 wish. You will find that it is all right to cry and to  
 laugh, to share how you feel or just listen. You do  
 not have to talk at a meeting if you don't wish to.  
 We welcome your participation, but it is not a  
 requirement. Join us as we travel this path of  
 grief.



## Helpful Hint...

"Wanting to live again and learning to live again  
 takes time. The path out of the other side of the  
 valley is steep, and we all often stumble. But with  
 time—time spent doing the work of grief—you can  
 find the path to a world made richer by your love."  
 --Bronna Romaoff, Ph.D.



## Book In Review...

Healing A Parent's Grieving Heart – 100 Practical  
 ideas after your child dies by Alan Wolfelt. Offers  
 100 ideas that help parents understand and  
 reconcile grief. Covers common challenges such  
 as dealing with marital stress, helping surviving  
 siblings, dealing with hurtful advice from others  
 and exploring feelings of guilt.

Available from the Centering Corp,  
[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org) Price: \$11.95

## July's Child

The fireworks race toward Heaven,  
 Brilliant colors in the sky.  
 Their splendor ends in seconds  
 On this evening in July.

"Her birthday is this Saturday," I whisper with a  
 sigh

She was born this month, she loved this month,  
 And she chose this month to die.

Like the bright and beautiful fireworks glowing  
 briefly in the dark

They are gone too soon, and so was she ...  
 Having been, and left their mark.

A glorious, incandescent life, a catalyst, a spark ...  
Her being gently lit my paths, and softened all  
things dark.

The July birth, the July death of my happy summer  
child

Marks a life too brief that ended without rancor,  
without guile

Like the fireworks that leave images on  
unprotected eyes,  
Her lustrous life engraved my heart with love that  
never dies.

--Sally Migliaccio - in Memory of my beloved  
Tracey

## The Scream

The smile you see is not all of me,  
For I'm not what I seem.

I laugh and smile but all the while,  
My smile holds in a scream.

For when I see a little girl,  
So innocent and free,  
I think about my little girl,  
Who died at seventeen.

And then the scream  
comes welling up,  
From in my soul so black,

And so my smile must block it in,  
And laughter hold it back.

I saw her born and watched her grow,  
from child to blooming lass,  
But through the years I couldn't know,  
I'd have to see her pass.

The suffering within my heart,  
I hide from all the world.

I do my job, I play the part,  
And miss my little girl.

A song about a father's love,  
So sweet with tenderness,  
Awakes in me the horror of,  
My loss and loneliness.

So, if they say "He takes it well,  
He'll be OK we all can tell.

How well his life continues on,  
It's almost if she wasn't gone."

Remember that I'm not so sane,  
Playacting, keeping up the game,  
My nightmare life trapped in a dream,  
You see, my smile holds in a scream.

-- Steve Tutt TCF, Tyler, Texas



## How ?

How can my daughter Alison go play volleyball?  
How can Carolyn audition for the school musical?  
How can they be out and about,  
while I'm stuck here in the quicksand of a mother's  
grief?

Because they are separate from me.  
Physically, mentally, spiritually,  
they are living their own lives.  
Now I get it-- they are separate from me.

That's how Barbie and Tommy could die without  
me.

They were living their own lives long before I let  
go.

Now they're dead-- but I am not.

Now I get it-- my children are a part of me, but we  
are separate.

I don't have to die, I can go on living.  
But how?

--Carol Bozman

## Precious Child Remembered

We know that you are hurting

We know just how you feel.

The pain deep inside your heart

You feel it can't be real.

We know what's going through your mind,

Thoughts that cloud it through the day.

We're on the road you're traveling now.

It can be handled, there's a way.

Don't fight the tears you're feeling,

You must just let them flow.

Speak of your child daily

To many people that you know.

Find others who can understand

They'll hold you as you cry.

The questions, we have all asked,

All the how's and every why.

We will always think of our child,

No one will have to say a word.

They will remain in our hearts

Our precious child remembered.

--author Unknown



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

Sam Boldissar  
Born: 10/91 Died: 3/17  
Parents: Jeeri & Frank Boldissar

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

Julian Burns  
Born: 12/18 Died: 1/19  
Parents: Daniel & Marta Burns

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

Ryan Dobie  
Born: 7/92 Died: 2/19  
Parents: Linda & Douglas Dobie

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

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

Marc David Guerreva  
Born: 7/97 Died: 7/17  
Mother: Sharon Cortez

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

Jillian Nicole Katnic  
Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18  
Mother: Debbie Hughes

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

Kyle Bernard Kirby  
Born: 5/93 Died: 9/18  
Father: Vince Kirby

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 Kropman  
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12  
Parents: Brenda & Greg Kropman

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

Lizzie Jester  
Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18  
Father: Lee Jester

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 Match  
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18  
Parents: Mike & Shirley Match  
Grandmother: Susan Match

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: 6/17  
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

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

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

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

Donnie Vincent Puliselich  
 Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18  
 Mother: Maria Puliselich  
 Sister: Michelle Pulislich

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quvia (Cody) Samuel  
 Born: 4/74 Died: 11/18  
 Parents: Vincent & Betty  
 Samuel

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

Matthew L Weiss  
 Born: 9/96 Died: 8/18  
 Mother: Natalie Narumoto

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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, click on the following link to donate online. [www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.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: Eric Douglas Vines July 1977 - July 1991



### Eric

Whenever I think of you  
**I see** your smile,  
your chubby cheeks  
you stopping whatever you were doing...  
to run and help Great-grandma into the house.

Whenever I think of you  
**I remember** Boy Scouts,  
paper routes  
swimming in the backyard  
volleyball, soccer and basketball at Lomita Park.

Whenever I think of you  
**I hear** your thud of a discarded backpack  
the clump, clump, clump as you took the stairs two  
at a time  
I hear your laughter,  
your voice saying, "Mom, I'm home! What's for  
dinner?"

Whenever I think of you  
**I feel** your compassion for others  
Your Love, your thoughtfulness  
Your wonderful bear hugs  
and your continuing closeness.

Whenever I think of you  
**I know** I will always treasure our 14 years together,  
I'll treasure your helpfulness, and bubbly  
personality  
And I know with certainty that the bond of love  
between a mother and son is forever.

Until we meet again....  
Missing and loving you always, Happy Birthday!  
Love, Mom

## A Birthday Tribute to: Tiffany Lamb Corkins July 1970 - August 2005



Happy (what would have been your 49th) Birthday My darling daughter,

So many milestones we have missed celebrating together. You never met your niece and nephew, Madison Tiffany has your name. Your boys are 16 and 18 now, were 2 and 4 when you died. High school graduation is in June for Jake and then he goes into the Air Force in August. Joey still has 2 years of high school, then no decisions yet. We are in constant contact, we are bonded forever. ♡

You are missed daily by me, your brother, your boys and friends. They talk about you on social media, and love it when I post old pictures. You left a legacy of love, perseverance, intelligence, kindness, generosity and beauty. I am so sad I don't have you in my life. You are greatly missed and loved.

♡ Your Mom XO

## For Siblings...



### Hi Friends,

On July 18 my sister, Monique, would have turned thirty. When we were children we would talk about how we thought our lives would be in our thirties, although in the back of our minds we wondered if she would live that long. After all those years of wondering we finally have the answer to that.

As I laid on the couch one evening - crying, feeling alone, grieving over her loss and the losses I've felt since her death, I thought about how different my life would be if only she had not died. How my life would be better. Since her death it seems as though everything was turned upside down and inside out. And as sad as it is, people who have clearly not experienced the death of someone who is tied to their heart tend to lack compassion and understanding, which in turn only makes the grieving person feel more alone, a feeling I wouldn't have if only my sister hadn't died.

And in the midst of all this sadness and anger I found myself remembering all the hours we spent in our bedrooms playing house and planning our future. We made a promise that when we were married and had children no matter how busy things got we would always find time to sit and chat. I can see us so clearly as we made this pact. This one memory led me to



remember other memories. I can still hear her laugh; at times I think I hear her call my name, and when my heart is aching over something I think about what she might say to me at such a time. I cherish the memories we made.

She taught me a lot of things. She was the first baby I ever held, the first person I ever trusted, and the person I shared my secrets with. She taught me about unconditional love and friendship, and sadly, through her death she gave me the desire to want to learn to live instead of just surviving. Her death taught me the importance of each minute we have here. It also gave me the ability to see the things that matter and to blow off the things that are not going to matter so much when our time here is up. I've learned so much from her life and her death and although it is a daily struggle as I work very hard to implement these new lessons I've learned, and to adjust to this new life and this new person I'm becoming since her death. I find my thoughts moving from "If only she had not died" to "What if she had never lived?" What would my life have been like without her? While she just wasn't here long enough, the impact she's had on my life and the person I will become is too great to put into words. If she had never lived I would have missed out on so much. I'm grateful for the times we shared and miss her deeply. I think of Monique as an angel in waiting. So in memory of her the following are lyrics to the song, "*Angels in Waiting*" by Tammy Cochran who is also a surviving sibling.

"We camped out on the living room floor in our old sleeping bags by a make believe fire in a tent made of covers. We talked for hours my two brothers and me keeping the faith racing with destiny.

They were angels in waiting, waiting for wings to fly from this world, away from their pain, treasuring time till time came to leave, leaving behind sweet memories, angels in waiting, angels waiting for wings.

They always knew they'd never grow old, sometimes the body is weaker than the soul. In their darkest hour I made a promise I will always keep. I'll give them life. I'll let them live through me.

They were angels in waiting, waiting for wings to fly from this world, away from their pain, treasuring time till time to leave, leaving behind sweet memories, angels in waiting, angels in waiting for wings.

They were angels in waiting,  
Angels in waiting for wings,  
Angels in waiting,  
Angels in waiting ...for me.

Love and compassion,  
April Nicholson, Monique's sister

## For Grandparents...



## And Then There Were Two...

Ten years ago my son and his wife were blessed with identical triplet daughters. The girls were all tiny, and the prognosis was solid for two of them. Caitlin, Julia and Lauren were born on the 18th of April. It started out as a happy day. Todd was in the delivery room, camera in hand, as each girl was placed in an incubator. First out of the delivery room was Lauren, content but tiny. After about 25 minutes Julia was ushered out in her little portable incubator. We waited a very long time for Caitlin. Finally she was brought out, many nurses and doctors surrounded her incubator. I stood near the elevator and waited for them. I looked at her...hand respirator for breathing, intravenous lines, blue in color, and tears streamed down my face. "Are you a relative?" one of the nurses asked. I told them I was a grandmother. "Would you like to look at her for a few seconds?" The nurse could see my sorrow. All eyes avoided mine. I looked at Caitlin and knew, I just knew, this would not end well.

Todd came out to the hall, still wearing scrubs. He was happy and beaming, but expressed concern about Caitlin. I nodded. He asked me if I'd seen her. I nodded again. He told me they had taken her to a corner of the delivery room and spent a long time with her. I nodded again. "It's not good, is it mom?" he asked. I shook my head and hugged him. I told him how beautiful they all were and that the other two were healthy despite their size.

Todd spent some time with his wife, then proceeded to visit his three daughters. When he got to the neonatal ICU he knew that he would be staying there. We all scrubbed and went to see the babies. We touched their little feet. But we weren't allowed to see Caitlin. Only Todd was allowed in her area. My son stayed in the neonatal ICU with Caitlin. He got to know the nurses and doctors and other parents while he was visiting with Julia who was also in level 1. I left the hospital about 10:30 p.m. Todd remained in the neonatal unit with Caitlin.

The next morning I awoke to a phone call from Todd. He'd spent the night with Caitlin. She was still hand bagged, a nurse was manually pumping air into her lungs. He thought she had a chance. He would stay with her, he said. About 11 am he called and we talked. He hadn't eaten anything, and I asked what he would like as I was driving down to the hospital. "You don't have to do that, Mom", he said. But I knew I had to be there.

I arrived with the special food he'd requested and we sat in the visitors' lounge outside the neonatal area. Todd was hungry and exhausted. We talked. "I don't know what I'll do if she dies, mom", he cried. I cried,

too. I knew what was coming and I knew it would be soon. I told him that if she were meant to live, she would live.

He didn't want to accept that.

We walked to his wife's room for a quick visit and the phone rang. The family needed to return immediately to the neonatal ICU. Todd pushed his wife's wheelchair, her mother and I walked silently through the tunnels. The long walk was punctuated by the clicking of heels on the concrete floor. The tunnel echoed. None of us said anything. There were no words. This was the worst time.

We arrived at the neonatal unit and were immediately ushered into a special room. A nurse was still providing manual respiration for Caitlin. The doctors said it was hopeless and this couldn't continue. Her heart and lungs were not developed. Todd reached over and touched his tiny daughter, tears rolling down his face onto her little blanket. His heart was broken. Caitlin was disconnected from the tubes and the manual respiration was stopped. Todd's wife held Caitlin and then Todd held her. I stood behind my son, hand on his shoulder, watching him as he suffered this unimaginable and immense pain. Pain that I couldn't cure. Todd asked if I wanted to hold her. I said, "you hold her, she knows your voice. I'll hold her later."

Caitlin's little cap fell off. Her eyes were closed, her mouth a tiny rosebud with lips slightly parted. I touched her arm and head. "She's gone, sweetheart", I whispered. The nurse came over, checked vitals and confirmed a grandmother's intuition. I hugged Todd and told him that this was the worst pain he would ever endure. He wept and his body shook from shock, pain and exhaustion.

We lingered for a while, looking at the baby whose life was never meant to be. Finally, all left the room but me. Caitlin was peacefully wrapped in her little blanket, a beautiful child whose time had come. I touched her sweet face and tiny hands. Her soul was gone, but her fight for life both before and after her birth touched my Irish heart.

Later Todd told his son, "Caitlin didn't make it, Buddy." His son crawled up on his lap and patted Todd's head and arm. There were no words.

We were all devastated. Now it is I who weep for my lost child. Todd was killed December 19, 2002, and his pain is now my pain. The proud father of five, a man whose life was so extraordinary, whose attitude was so upbeat, whose love for his children was so deep and profound, whose accomplishments were so significant, was now gone. I like to think that he has joined Caitlin and together they are happy.

Thinking of that day, 10 years ago, brings tears to my eyes. I love my son more than life. I couldn't imagine his pain. Now I live his pain. My only child was ripped from my life. Life isn't fair, life isn't equitable. There is no reason. It just is.

I no longer have to keep it together for my son as I did on April 19, 1995. I no longer try. If I have a bad day, that's the way it is. If my friends don't like my tears or my sorrow, there's nothing to be said. If others don't like the ways I choose to memorialize and remember my child, that's fine. Those who know me, really know me, understand that my pain is deep and it is forever. My tears are pure and cleansing. Life will never be as good as it was. The love for my child is real. He lives on in my heart. He is my inspiration to go on, to keep on living, to make the best of what I am given. For that is what he did. I keep him in my heart.....he is one special son.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin In Memory of Todd Mennen and Caitlin Mennen TCF, Katy, TX

## From Our Members...



"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends".

Corinthians 13:7-8

--Submitted by Joe Lawrence

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, but donations are welcomed. 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: July 1st for August 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. To make it easier for those who would rather donate online, just go to our website and use the donate button at [www.tcfsqla.org](http://www.tcfsqla.org). A receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter. For donations at the meetings, attach a tribute to your donation to be listed in the newsletter. (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 donations are definitely 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.....(310) 648-4878
- Kitty Edler.....(310) 541-8221
- Richard Leach (grandchild).....(310) 833-5213
- Kristy Mueller (sibling).....(310) 938-2409

**LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS**

- Beach Cities/L.A.** (Manhattan Bch): (970) 213-6293 Third Tue.
- 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.Alivealone.org](http://www.Alivealone.org)
- SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE:** Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Terry Jordan, LCSW (301) 859-2241
- 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...**

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| thetearsfoundation.org                      | childloss.com  |
| goodgriefresources.com                      | griefwatch.dom |
| bereavedparentsusa.org                      | opentohope.com |
| healingafterloss.org                        | webhealing.com |
| survivorsosuicide.com                       | alivelaone.org |
| taps.org (military death)                   | angelmoms.com  |
| save.org (suicide/depression)               |                |
| pomc.com (families of murder victims)       |                |
| grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)      |                |
| www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide) |                |
| Griefwords.com (for grandparents)           |                |

**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  
CHAPTER CO-LEADER: **position open**  
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).



## 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 <http://tcfsbla.org/donate/> 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 Elizabeth Mann, July 1960 - May 2005. July 19th, your special day. We remember the Birthday parties and the fun we had.

Love always.  
From Mum, Vicki and your sons

In loving memory of Jonathan "Jamie" Schubert, July 1965 - December 2006. Remembering your kind, brave, spirit, and Loving you as always, Mom

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

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

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

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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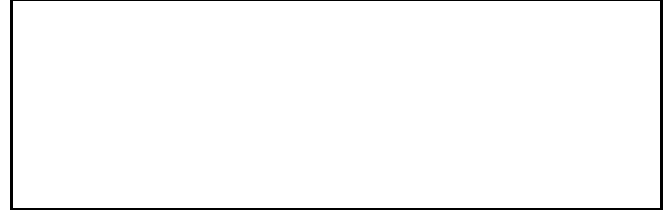
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Remembering and  
Missing you  
This Holiday  
In July

– Return Service Requested –



July 2019

## 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.**