



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

NOVEMBER 2019 ISSUE

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

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

LOCATION:
The Neighborhood Church
415 Paseo Del Mar
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274
(South of Torrance Beach)

DIRECTIONS: Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Go to the WEST parking lot. Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

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

The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The November 7th meeting will start with "Thanksgiving and Grief. How can I be thankful for anything... My child is DEAD!"

TCF World Wide Candle Lighting is Sun. Dec 8th. Remember to submit your child's pictures for the slide show if you did not do it last year. (See p.14 for more information)

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Ken at (310) 544-6690.

TCF Lunch Group meets for lunch at Mimi's Café every Friday at 1:00. (Crenshaw and PCH). All members are invited.

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The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, Dec. 8th, unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the life and memories of our children who have died. As candles are lit on December 8th, 2019 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people will commemorate and honor the memory of all our children gone too soon. We invite the you, your guests, and the community to attend this year's event being held at St. James School's O' Gorman Center in Torrance, from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. The address is 4625 Garnet St. Torrance. For more information and to have your child included in the slide show, see instructions on page 14.



The Thursday, Nov. 7th meeting will start with "Thanksgiving and Grief. How can I be thankful for anything... My child is DEAD!" This thought erupts from many of us in those first few years. The mere thought of enduring the Thanksgiving holiday when you are newly bereaved is overwhelming. This emotional and confusing time of the year is exasperated by your grief and pain. But remember, **you** get to choose **if and how** you participate in the holiday season...what traditions will still work for you and which ones need to be set aside this year. Do you attend gatherings, leave early or not at all? Do you want your child mentioned or will you fall apart at the thought? Do you want to be alone or with others for support? Give yourself permission to be, wherever you are, with your feelings. This meeting, we will be discussing *How planing and preparing ways of dealing with the holidays ahead of time, can ease a lot of stress for a bereaved family.* Discussing and forming a plan will make facing Thanksgiving easier. We hope you will join us as we share what helped other bereaved parents in making the upcoming Thanksgiving season easier to bear.

Shared Thoughts on Celebrating Thanksgiving While Grieving

For many of us, fall means the time of year to be in awe of all the beautiful colors of nature, and to give thanks for our many blessings. When our child or sibling dies, our eyes still see nature's beauty, but our hearts are in too much pain to feel,

appreciate, or enjoy anything. The Thanksgiving holiday seems almost unacceptable to many newly bereaved. It is very difficult to give thanks, when one of our greatest blessings has been taken from us, and the gut-wrenching pain is with us every moment.

We now know how precious the gift of life is. We are more appreciative of our surviving family, and find the dreaded anticipation of not having our whole family together for our traditional Thanksgiving adds to our grief. This is not a time to shelter others from our pain. Not being honest can give false messages, and confuses others who want to help us. Friends and extended family members frequently think they know what is always best for us. Their advice may only be best for them, by easing their pain and pretending you are capable of handling more than you can.

It is important to include immediate family members in your holiday planning. Don't try to read their minds. You are showing respect and acknowledging their pain by getting their input. They, too, have apprehensions of upcoming holidays, and need to have open verbal communication.

If you plan to be with friends or extended family, it may be wise to give advance notice that you may not be able to "keep it together." If you plan to have people in, try to let others help you prepare the dinner. You might want to deviate from traditions. Only you can decide what is best for you. Ask friends to accept your decision. We kept all our traditions, but that may not be best for you. We still had our surviving children at home, and it seemed important to hold to our seasonal celebrations.

Even though it is difficult to count blessings, we need to communicate with our feelings. Family, friends, and relationships are always at the top of our list of things to be thankful for. Next came material things, which now seem so trivial, and not even worth enumerating. "Things" don't belong on the same page anymore. Most of us have learned a new meaning about life. What a waste it would be if we endured all this pain and agony, and did not become a more caring person. We also have a new understanding of the word "compassion," and have learned to reach out to those who need us.

We should not minimize our pain. It often prevents us from counting our blessings, and that is very normal during our early grief. The intense pain blocks out everything. We should feel no guilt for having normal human reactions. Allow

yourselves to grieve and cry, it is very healing.

There are no shortcuts to get through our grief. But, it will get softer, and tolerable, and we learn how to handle the holidays. I could not believe this in my fresh grief. I have healed more than I ever thought possible. All memories were so painful. One of the things I am most thankful for is that I can now remember beautiful times with Doug, without having intense pain. I feel you will also have this blessing one day.

God Bless, Marie Hofmockel

--TCF Valley Forge, VA

Holidays

The cool crisp air of autumn brings the excitement and anticipation of Thanksgiving, the holidays, family gatherings, special food, warm, joyous memories - and, for those of us experiencing illness, grief or separation from those we love, it can also be a time of pain, sadness or dread.

How can we comfort and heal the hopelessness and emptiness we feel as the rest of the world is dancing with happiness? Instead of pretending to be happy, allow yourself the permission to be exactly where you are – sad, withdrawn, depressed, angry – or, if a moment of quiet, relief, warmth, love, or happiness washes over you, allow yourself that moment. You may judge yourself for being sad or a "downer" and in the same breath, deny yourself any moments of peace and happiness, by feeling happiness or for feeling good.

Grief will come in waves— waves of memories of what you once shared together that you no longer will have. Holiday time can bring up incredible frustration, helplessness, and anger at a world that appears to be totally oblivious to your pain. As the holidays approach, focus on what you need to take care of yourself. It might be to create a new way of celebrating important events that will be a healing balm to your grief rather than a re-opening of the wounds. Solicit other people's support in your active process of surviving the season. Share with family and friends your plan to take care of your hurting. If there is something someone can do to nurture you, let them know. You will be giving them the gift of caring.

Our senses are acute at this time. Every sight,

sound (i.e. music), aroma, taste (i.e. goodies), and touch will be magnified. Or the opposite may occur and we may be anesthetized and not be able to feel anything.

Throughout our journey into and out of the winter months, it is vital that we listen carefully each day, hour, and minute, to what we are experiencing, what we need, and what we can do to get what we need.

Be gentle with yourself. Treat yourself as you would the most delicate, tiny child who is hurting—who yearns only to be held, cuddled, and protected. Care for yourself as the precious human being that you are.

—Janet Childs TCF, San Jose/Palo Alto, CA



Thankful... Versus Thankless

This is the time of the year when many bereaved parents start saying out loud what newly bereaved parents have been thinking for weeks and weeks. "I am really dreading the holidays". And why not? When your grief is so new you haven't had the necessary time to accept life as it is for you now.

On the other hand there are those of us who have had the necessary time and the proper support, who are able to observe the holidays in a less painful way. We have kept some of those old traditions that warm our hearts and thrown out those that are either too painful or meaningless now. We have created a life that doesn't include someone who was a vital part of who and what we were. We're different now, doing different things, because losing a child forces you into that position if you are to survive in an emotionally healthy way.

The words thankful and thankless follow one another in the dictionary; so close together in a book, yet so far apart in meaning. When you think about it the "difference between" the two words is full and less. Though those of us who have had more time do, like the more newly bereaved, have less in the way of family. But our lives have fullness again because we have learned to be thankful and appreciate that which we have left in the way of people and memories, more so than we ever thought possible.

As you approach this Thanksgiving, if you haven't yet been able to make your adjustment, I hope you will feel what you must for now because whatever you are feeling is okay. It isn't until you have reached the place in your grief where the

ability to make good choices returns to your life that you can make some important changes in how you approach the holidays.

I hope the transition from thankless to thankful will be soon in coming to you, for that will mean some peace has returned to your life. Above all, I do wish you peace during this holiday season. I wish you more of the same in the New Year.

-- Mary Cleckley, Lawrenceville, GA

Do Thanksgiving Day Your Way

Who says we have to follow Thanksgiving the traditional way?

With all the prescribed rituals of that holiday?
So what if we don't have baked ham or turkey?
We're tired of that old bird,
so why not some beef jerky?

No, no cranberry sauce, no candied yams,
no pumpkin pie.

(She hated pumpkin pie; and truly, that's no lie.)

This is our very first Thanksgiving without her,
you know .

We're not in the mood for all the fuss -
it's still touch'n go.

Mom's in the kitchen doing the best she can.

She's crying her eyes out,
flooding the no-stick pan.

So what about it, gang,
let's tough it out and avoid the clutter.

Lets go for hoagies, tuna salad, maybe
jelly and peanut butter?

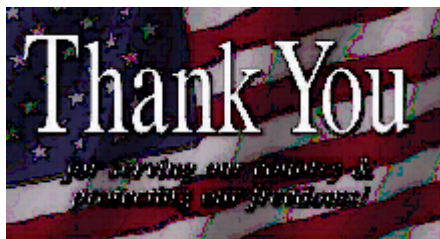
This year we don't have to be so doggone formal.

Next year, hopefully,

we'll try to be more normal.

--Dave Ziv TCF TCF, Bucks Mont, PA Chapter

A Note to Honor the Parents Who have lost their Veteran Children



To take part in the events that honor and thank our worthy veterans is a national tradition. For the parent whose son or daughter is a veteran but has since passed away, it is a double edged sword. They can stand tall in pride at their child's service to our country as well as their accomplishments while in the service, but within certainly lies the powerful ache of loss we all know to well. From our chapter to all the parents feeling both pride and sorrow—we thank you for your child's

service. We thank you for raising a patriot. We thank you from the depths of our own broken hearts.

When Will The Pain End?

When I look back over my grief journey, I marvel at how far I have come and yet at how poignant and permanent the loss of my son will always be for me. How can this dichotomy exist within one person's mind? The horror of the news of my son's death, the shock that slammed my mind into numbness, the unremembered conversation, the platitudes that followed the memorial service and the first two months of living in a complete fog of disbelief are very vivid in my mind. The horror is too real to forget.

The next six months of melancholy, miserable mourning are forever locked in my mind. The pure physical pain, the piercing jolts when I momentarily thought of something beyond my child's death and was mercilessly slammed back into the finality of death's amputation of my son's smile. His laughter and physical presence on this earth are etched for eternity in my soul. My mind simply couldn't accept that Todd was gone from this plane.

The first anniversary of his death was a horrifying day worsened by a very bleak and foreshadowing conversation with my son's widow. Life would be much different for my husband and me from this point forward. There were no bridges to the past. She made that clear.

I was inconsolable from the impact of her wicked words. But I made it through the first and second years with help from my Compassionate Friends Chapter. I could cry and scream about the injustice of my loss and all that followed and each parent understood. Eventually I had told my story enough times to enough people that I subconsciously accepted Todd's death and all the changes in my life that followed. At some point in my second year of grief I began reaching out to others. Helping others, seeing their pain, hearing their tearful words, had become cathartic for me. The more I helped, the more I was helped. Yes, my son is still with me in my heart and in my memories. The movies of his life play in my mind almost daily. I have made new friends. I have walked away from old acquaintances. I have learned to separate the meaningful from the meaningless. And I have learned that I will always feel the pain of my son's death, yet I must always

move forward into hope. Each day brings more hope as I accomplish another piece of my lifelong grief work. So the dichotomy exists within me, In my heart, mind, and soul my child will live forever.

The memories of the full measure of each day of his life are there to give me peace and solace. Yet, the brutal pain of my son's death is there, too. Unlike any other love in life, a parent's love is unconditional and transcends all. There is a peace in knowing that. The pain doesn't end. It simply reshaped itself into a quiet, soft ache that gives a gentle, often tearful, reminder that our child will always be with us. And perhaps that is as it should be.

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

Looking to the Future

As you look at the awesome task ahead how to negotiate the pitfalls and anticipate some of the hazards in the valley of the shadow of death these are some of the things you should try to learn:

1. Do those things that give you peace of mind; not necessarily what others suggest or pressure you to do.
2. Surround yourself with people who understand and make you feel comfortable; who know they can't fix things; who are compassionate; and who don't try to take your grief away from you.
3. Tell those who care about you what you need in order to survive (they do not automatically know); and accept the fact that not all relatives and old friends will be able to provide what you need at this time (so you may have to give some of them up).
4. Give yourself permission to do what you feel like doing, as long as you harm no one: cry alone, pray, scream, cry with others, withdraw, express anger, meditate, cry some more.
5. Grieve when and how you want to, rather than on someone else's timetable.
6. Do things at your own pace, in accordance with your own feelings, and therefore accept the idea that you may not be able to accomplish everything you used to – at least for now, though perhaps long-term as well.
7. Maintain open communication with your spouse and children, recognizing that we each grieve differently.
8. Look out for your own needs first; this is one time of life when selfishness is really okay.
9. Try hard to believe that life really is worth living–

whether your rationale be to perpetuate your child's memory; or to resume accomplishing the goals you previously had set for your self; or to strive toward entirely new goals; or to try to find the answers to the age-old question of "why?"; or for any other reason that has meaning to you. Have faith, even on the darkest days, that there will indeed be light at the end of the tunnel; that life may again have meaning as you begin to emerge from the valley of the shadow.

--Mort Schrag TCF L.A., CA

In loving memory of Becky, 35 years later.

Excerpted from his booklet Walking Through the Valley of the Shadow: When a Jewish Child Dies



The Irritability of Grief

As much as I have read about grief, I don't think I've read anything about how irritable it makes me. I'm guessing I'm not alone. I am short tempered, easily annoyed, and just generally uncomfortable in my own skin. There seem to be many contributing factors.

First, even after four and a half years, I often do not sleep well. I go to bed too early, probably, because often I'm just "done" with the day and want it to be over. Then, I wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep because I ruminate over and over about Jordan's death, all the circumstances surrounding it, all the difficulties since. I wish my mind had an "off" switch, I could sure use one.

Next, my chest still hurts. Not as much of the time as it used to, but still often enough to bother me. There is an elephant who has planted its foot upon my chest.

Third, it takes a lot of energy to put on the mask I wear so that I can maneuver about in the world. The mask that smiles at the good news of others, the time they have with their intact families, the joys and challenges that come with an ordinary life. The kind of life I used to have.

There are fifty-five conditions listed on Wikipedia that can cause irritability. Grief isn't one of them. Insomnia and sleep deprivation are. I think grief should be there too.

I find exercise makes it better as does a dose of sunshine. Having a dog helps, especially a dog who "has issues."

Also, I'm not irritable when I am engaged in trying to be helpful to someone else. So I try to do

more of that.

But I am still irritable. Grief makes me irritable.
-- Peggi Johnson TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

Love Never Ends

I think what we parents who have lost a child fear the most after we have been through the worse nightmare that any parent can ever be put through: the fear of our child being forgotten!! The already existing feeling of guilt and failure that I have over the death of my children is being fueled by the stress of them being forgotten, that the more time goes by, the less their names will be mentioned, their memory will fade into something that only I will remember!!

When Leah was in treatment I was the one keeping her FB page going, but she was the kind of kid that hated being in the spotlight. I had to run it by her before I posted on her page. It's just different when your child is actually not a child anymore. So due to the way she wanted me not to put her name out in public like that (she just wanted to be like her other friends, not known as the high school girl who has cancer) her name wasn't out there much, she wasn't active with any of the cancer foundations or organizations! Older teens/young adults are so much different when they are going through this hell, than younger kids and young teens!

When Leah relapsed I didn't post much about her and what was going on, mostly because I respected her dignity and self-esteem. I just knew she hated being in this body and not being herself. I could see it in her eyes!!

When Leah was in her last days, I opened my house for friends to come and say goodbye, but also for Leah to hear and feel how many people loved her and would miss her! After she passed away, there was this new storm I had to make my way through; planning for her service, having my house full with friends and family, so this was like a high. Yes, I cried and was in a state of shock. But it almost felt so good doing this for Leah. Seeing the love, she was getting from so many people!! Her being honored!! It made me numb to my pain, this high was making me almost forget what was really going on. Hundreds of people hugging me, talking about Leah, celebrating her!! Tears and smiles, memories being exchanged. Messages on my FB for days!



Then it was all over ... I'm in my second year of my children being gone. And I feel like I'm facing another part of this nightmare. The ordeal now is, to make sure my children are not forgotten! And I see this with other moms, dads who have been going through this longer than I. You want to find something that will be there forever in her/his name, or memory, something that shows the world your child existed! Our kids have fought something so horrific and were robbed of their lives! A life that was just beginning! And we couldn't save them, we couldn't make it better! They are victims, taken by the monster!! And once the children are gone, the messages stop, your child is not a part of the conversations of others anymore, the phone calls stop, the posts about your child on FB are getting less and less till they are disappearing, that's when the stress and fear starts: but what about my child?? She has been through this, she suffered, she was there once! She deserves to be remembered.

I'm very grateful that I have my special little things that make me and others think of my kids when they appear: rainbows, butterflies, dragonflies and hummingbirds, but mostly the little mermaid and everything about mermaids. But I also know how much it hurts to fight this fight of keeping your child's memory alive!

Life goes on I know, but my life will never be the same, and I'm constantly looking for something very meaningful to honor my children, that's why I'm reaching out to special people who are doing these incredible things, sharing their story and life. And each one of them has included them in their mission of bringing awareness to this childhood cancer world! Kids can't fight this alone! And we grieving parents can't do this alone either, keeping our children's memory alive!

So my deepest, heartfelt thank you to everyone who is helping me and also my bereaved parent's friends to find ways of honoring our children and their memories, their lives! It is so very very important for us and not just on anniversaries! Memories are so precious, but even more, if this is all you have left of your child" "Love Never Ends" Mahalo with Love!!!

--Alan Goldberg, Leah's and Mark's Dad - TCF Honolulu

Navigating PTSD After a Suicide

What do you think about when you hear the term “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder?” The first thing I think about is the military. We so often hear about our veterans returning home from war with symptoms of PTSD. We are also all aware that this untreated PTSD often leads to suicide. But, what we do not often think about is PTSD experienced by survivors in the aftermath of a suicide. In fact, I believe that PTSD after a suicide is more prevalent than we think.

The National Institute of Mental Health states that, “PTSD develops after a terrifying ordeal that involved physical harm or the threat of physical harm. The person who develops PTSD may have been the one who was harmed, the harm may have happened to a loved one, or the person may have witnessed a harmful event that happened to loved ones or strangers.” Essentially, PTSD can develop after someone experiences a traumatic event. I think it is important to discuss the trauma associated with suicide in order to identify how PTSD can develop in survivors.

The night my father took his life, my sister was the one to be notified. Around midnight, two policemen and a grief specialist rang her doorbell. Her husband quickly jumped out of bed, bewildered by who could be at the door at such a late hour. My brother-in-law answered the door while my sister stood on the stairs. She quickly ran to the door when the policemen asked, “Does the daughter of Robert L. live here?” She has expressed to me the pain and shock she experienced when the men told her that our father had taken his life. I flew back to Colorado shortly after receiving the call from my sister. I remember sitting up with her those nights following my father’s death. We were both somewhat creeped out and could not figure out why. My sister expressed to me the sickness she felt when she looked at her front door, and the fear she had that more bad news would come to her front door if she fell asleep. She discussed the jumpy feeling she had when someone rang the doorbell. I remember her saying, “It’s like I have PTSD, but how is that possible?” It is possible because my sister and I both just experienced a traumatic event. Something happened in our lives that would forever alter our path. The world as we knew it had changed.

My sister and I played detective after my

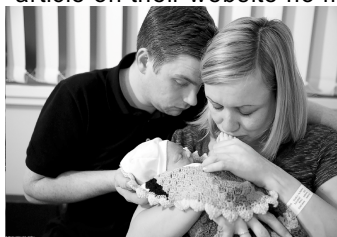
father’s death. I am ok without knowing the details; in fact, knowing them makes it that much harder for me. My sister, however, needed to know every last detail. Within a week of my father’s death, we knew the gun he used, where and when he purchased it, where he was sitting, the angle of the gun, etc. You name it, we knew it. Talk about trauma! There isn’t a movie out there that could make me feel so ill. Why did we do this to ourselves? Because we wanted answers. As a survivor, you are always searching for answers that often do not exist. This search can expose you to more pain and trauma than the suicide itself. Experiencing this level of trauma can ignite symptoms of PTSD.

I did not speak to the pain and trauma experienced by those who may have witnessed or been the one to find their loved one. I have never been one to pretend to understand something that I simply cannot. I can only speak to my own experiences. What I can say as a licensed therapist is the risk of having symptoms of PTSD is greater for those who were a witness or found their loved ones. I want to also pass along the signs and symptoms of PTSD for those who are unsure if what they are experiencing is PTSD. You can read them by going to <http://www.oursideofsuicide.com/2014/07/17/ptsd-after-a-suicide/>

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, please know that you are not alone. Know that what you are experiencing is a normal reaction after you lose a loved one to suicide. I encourage everyone to speak with a licensed professional when they feel ready. And if at first you don’t succeed, try again. Remember you are paying them, they aren’t paying you. So, if you do not feel a connection with the person who is treating you, don’t keep going. There are plenty of great therapists out there!

--JESSICA | JULY 17, 2014

Editor’s Note: I would encourage you to explore their PTSD article on their website no matter how your child died.



Grief of Couples

When a child dies each parent begins to deal with grief in his or her own way. Some openly express their feelings, crying often and talking freely about their thoughts. Others immerse themselves in work or daily routines and decline to discuss their feelings at all. Parents differ also in their feelings about visible

reminders of the baby— for example, whether keeping the child's room intact is comforting and maintains a feeling of closeness with the baby or is a too painful reminder of the loss.

Couples often find that grief affects them in opposite ways at any given point in time. It is common to hear couples giving the following description of their experience. Initially, one parent may feel overwhelmed by grief and can do little but cry and talk with others about feelings of shock, disbelief, anger, loss, their memories of the baby and of the day of the death. Their partner, on the other hand, may begin to take charge of arranging the details of the memorial service, notifying family members, making any necessary decisions, and soon lose themselves in work. One parent may find it very important to be able to go into the child's room and see pictures of the child while the other may avoid any visible memory of the baby.

As the parent who has been openly expressing grief begins to feel better and can resume daily activities, the other parent often finds that they can no longer maintain their pace. They start to feel that they are only going through the motions at work and find themselves suddenly overwhelmed by feelings of anger or sadness. They often worry because they thought they were doing so well and then see themselves losing control.

Throughout this initial period of grief parents also search for a reason for their baby's death. This may take the form of looking for a medical cause for SIDS. They may review articles and research publications about SIDS in hope of finding evidence of a specific cause. They may also try to understand some meaning for the death and for awhile may worry that this is in some way a punishment for them. Again, couples often find that while one parent dwells on this, the other is feeling that this is a useless pursuit, thinking that finding an answer will not really change anything. Then at some point the feelings reverse so that the first parent begins to come to terms with the loss while the second starts to question why their baby had to die.

Unfortunately, these different paths people take through grief can lead to misunderstandings and a sense of isolation.

The person who starts out expressing their grief can begin to think their partner doesn't care or can become angry at the partner for hiding his or her feelings and not talking or listening. The person who is trying hard to "get on with life" may worry that their partner will not recover.

Actually, these opposite coping styles of some couples may serve to maintain a balance in the family and to keep family functioning as they grieve. Couples will often recognize their efforts to strive for this balance in statements such as "It's been a terrible week. We've both been really down. We couldn't help each other and nothing got done." They often see the swings in feelings as they say such things as "I had to be strong and keep things going but now I can't anymore." or "I saw that my husband was beginning to have a really hard time and I knew I had to pull myself together."

It helps avoid misunderstanding to know that each person goes through the grief process differently and that for couples the different feelings often serve as a way of allowing time support for the other to express their feelings.

—Ann Kincaid, ACSW

Newly Bereaved...

Doing Too Well



He told me that he had called because he was concerned about his wife. It had been five months since their child had died, and she wasn't doing well. I asked him what she was doing that bothered him. He told me that she was crying a great deal, wanted to talk about their child much of the time, wasn't sleeping well, was up a good part of the night wandering around, as a matter of fact, wanted to go to the cemetery almost every day, spent a lot of time looking at the child's pictures, and didn't want to change anything in "the room".

I asked him how he was doing. He told me that he was doing fine. Been working 13 or 14 hours a day. Hadn't always worked that much, but had been for the past two or three months. Said he didn't need to talk about their child, or look at the pictures because he had it all behind him. He had accepted it, and he thought she would be better if she would do the same. Sleep? Well, he slept fine. He'd found a few drinks before he went to bed, plus a tranquilizer when he awakened in the middle of the night and more of each on the weekend helped him quite a bit.

Now, if she is doing "poorly" and he's doing "fine", why is it, do you suppose, that I keep worrying about him?

--Mary Cleckley Atlanta, GA TCF

Seasoned Grievers...



Why We Still Go To TCF

“Are you still involved with that group? Aren't you over it yet? Why

do you go? These are the questions I often hear now that it has been more than seven years since Mark died. I suspect you hear them too. There are easy answers. But not everyone understands, unless you have been there.

Here are ten I can think of:

1. Because we never want the world to forget our child, so what we do, we do in his name.
2. Because when we reach out to help someone else, we also help ourselves.
3. Because someone was there for us when we needed it most, now the best way to say “Thank you” is to pass it on by being there for others.
4. Because it is the one thing we do that can bring something positive out of a tragedy.
5. Because we have found in TCF better friends and closer bonds than we ever thought possible. Here we can cry and hug people even if we don't know their last name or what they do for a living. And it doesn't matter.
6. Because a few people are qualified to walk up to a newly bereaved family and say “I know how you feel.” And because we can, we must.
7. Because sometimes we need to talk, too, and to remember and share. We are further along than many around us but we never forget.
8. Because many of us believe that one day we will meet our child, or grandchild, or brother or sister again, and he or she will ask “So what did you do with your life after I left?” and we will have an answer.
9. Because our presence might help newly bereaved families understand that they will survive and even laugh again.
10. Because we love cold coffee, stale cookies and hard metal chairs.

--By Rich Edler TCF South Bay/L.A., CA

Learn from those who have experienced healing after loss. Their survival is reassuring proof that you too, will endure. Their understanding and empathy are their greatest gifts to you. --Karen Katafiasz

Friends and Family...

When Good Friends Walk Beside Us

When good friends walk beside us
On the trail that we must keep
Our burdens seem less heavy
And the hills are not so steep.
The weary miles pass swiftly
Taken in a joyous stride
And the world seems brighter
when friends walk by our side.

--Author unknown



Welcome...

The Story of the Grieving Mother

There is an old story from China of a woman whose son had died. She went to the Buddhist temple and begged the monk to bring her son back, for her pain was just too unbearable and she could not go on with it. Rather than scoff or scold her for her request, the monk told her to go out and find one family who had not experienced a loss, and then he could stop her hurting.

So she set out to look for that family. The first place she decided to stop was at a very large castle on a hill. “Here,” she thought, “these people are so rich and wealthy, surely no loss or pain has ever come to them.” So she climbed to the castle and told her story to the servant who brought his mistress and master to talk to her. They told her such a sad story, and were in so much pain, that the woman thought, “I can help them! I've already been through this part of the pain.” So she stayed for awhile and helped this family. Soon, though, she resumed her search.

The next house, and then the next, and all those that followed, told her of such sad stories that at each one she stayed awhile to help them with their grief. Then one day she looked at herself, and she found that through helping so many others, her grief was not now so overwhelming and so painful. She still missed her son terribly, and still cried for him in the night, but she no longer was consumed in her own grief.

She found that by helping others, she had helped her own healing from this most painful loss. This is the idea of The Compassionate Friends and other support groups – to give support to those who are newly bereaved and lost in the fog, then

as they grow, to reach out to help others who are hurting. Together, we can make it through this journey down life's most painful and darkest road. Together, helping one another, we will survive.
--Orange Coast Chapter of TCF newsletter

Book In Review...



The Worst Loss, by Barbara Rosof. For families embarked on the torturous journey of healing after the death of a child. The ideas, suggestions, and practical advice will serve as a powerful guide.

Helpful Hint...



During the upcoming holidays, go easy on yourself. Often times doing something special in their memory is helpful. Be flexible, sometimes it is easier to incorporate new traditions into the holidays. Sometimes you may just have to accept that this year will be different because you are doing all you can. Keep in mind that whatever you do, the anticipation is often worse than the event itself.

First Thanksgiving

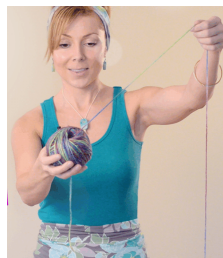
The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They'll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.
These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.
I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I'm thankful that she came.

Though she's gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.
So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute's all it takes.
--Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After
the Death of a Child

'Till We Meet Again ...

I can no longer look upon your face
But in my heart you'll always have a place
For deep within me your seed still grows
It left my body but not my soul
We shared a heartbeat for a brief time
Your little body protected by mine
You had to leave it but there was joy
You were my special little boy
I watched you grow and learn and play
It seems like it was yesterday
You had a plan and never faltered
Not knowing how your life would alter
You determinedly walked on your own path
And lived the life you longed to have
Yet never really got the chance
To walk the walk and dance the dance
I'd have given my world to take away your pain
And watch your life begin again
But sadly, it was not to be
God chose you and not me
How can a mother understand
What is to be in God's great plan
We fiercely hold to the gift He sent
And need to protect it till the end
To leave you there on that cold day
It was so hard to walk away
A parent's nightmare had finally come
The day I had to bury my son
Although I know you're in a better place
It's day-to-day for me with God's grace
But life has a way of catching up time
I'll be with you again soon, baby mine
Love, Mom

--From the poems of Deborah M. Streb, in loving memory of son Adam Marano TCF, Rochester NY



Grief work

Is like winding a ball of string.
You start with an end and you wind.
Then the ball slips through your fingers and rolls across the floor.

Some of your work is undone, but not all.

You pick it up and start over again, but you never have to begin again at the end of the string.
The ball never completely unwinds.
You've made some progress.

--TCF Southwestern Manitoba TCF newsletter



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

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

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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gregory Robert Ehrlich
Born: 4/91 Died: 2/19
Mother: Sarah Ott

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cheiann Jayda Berry
Born: 12/01 Died: 7/16
Mother: Kristina Berry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children

Remembered



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

Alexander John Jacobs
Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19
Mother: Diane Jacobs

Stefanie Jacobs
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97
Father: Rob Jacobs

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dax Jordan Quintana
Dantas De Oliveria
Born: 6/17 Died: 8/17

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

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

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

Parents: Alexandar & Sanderson
Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Children Remembered

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

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

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

* For corrections or to add your child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter, call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 and leave a message.

SAVE THE DATE: The Dec. 8th World Wide Candle Lighting will take place at the St. James school in Torrance, from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. The address is 4625 Garnet St. Torrance.

We will be having a slide show of our children as part of the ceremony. Linda Zelik has volunteered to assemble this wonderful tribute. To have your child included, please send Linda 3 pictures of your child and include their birth and death date on each one. You can e-mail them to Linzelik@gmail.com before Nov. 15th or bring them to the next meeting so she has time to add them to last year's video.

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)
* 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:
Kevin Zelik
11/85 - 6/10**



Dear Kev,

Even though it's been 9 years we still think of you and miss you every day! We remember so vividly your million watt smile that would light up a room. We were always so proud of you and all you did in your short life. I know you are enjoying seeing your new nieces from your side of the veil. It is too bad they never got to meet you, you would have been a cool uncle!

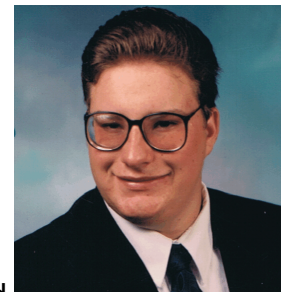
I hope you are proud of the book you inspired me to write, From Despair to Hope, Survival Guide for Bereaved Parents. Hopefully, sharing what I have learned and experienced will help others in their grief journey.

Thank you for the signs and dreams, they have helped so much in our healing.

May God bless you, son!

Love, Mom, Dad and Jeanine

**A Birthday Tribute to:
Richard Luthe
11/29/76 - 1/15/98**



Dear Rich,

At first it seemed a bit odd to be sending you a birthday wish, when we had been filled with so much sorrow. Then we realized that it is almost selfish of us, when it is your life we are celebrating.

It is still hard for us to believe that you have been gone for what seems just a short time,

when in reality hours have turned into days, days into years. There is never a time when we don't know that you are with us in our everyday lives. We still find change in your room, "a penny from heaven" always makes us smile. Our Disneyland tradition is still a bit awkward, but Goofy takes good care of us as though you were there with us.

We want to thank you for all the joy you brought us while you were here with us on earth. Thanks for the time you gave us. The laughter we shared, and even the times of tears. Thanks for the memories which pushed us to go on. The memories which will always seem like yesterday, the ones that seem as though you'll walk back through the door. Thanks for that wonderful smile—thanks for being you!

Ritchie we love you lots, and lots. After all, you taught us that to live is love; and we will love you for life.

Happy Birthday
Love Mom & Dad



For Siblings...

My Sister Watches over me

My sister's up in heaven,
not underneath this stone,
not buried in the ground
all quiet and alone.

She's with the other angels,
as happy as can be,
and from her lofty window
she watches over me.

And so I bring her flowers,
she'll see them from above.
For though I cannot see her,
my heart can feel her love.
--Jessica Bryan BPUSA, Augusta, GA

To My Little Brother:

Now we lay you down to sleep
I know the Lord your soul will keep
And as so far as heaven goes
You'll keep the angels on their toes.
And I shall live another day
Knowing you're not far away
But when I die, make no mistake
Your hand will be the first I take

And arm in arm we'll walk again,
God gave this gift.
Love has no end.

--Julie Harding TCF, Portland, OR

For Grandparents...



Grandparents: A Double Grief

If your parents are still living, they may have a double grief right now. They've lost a grandchild. They hate seeing you so sad. They can't take you on their knee and tell you everything will be all right like they used to do. They have a sense of failure and all the other feelings of loss. Older grandparents may wonder why they are still here and a vital young person is dead.

It's important that you ask your parents for what you need, to give as much as possible when they are in need, and to be honest with each other about how you feel. Hugs and shared tears can become valuable family memories right now with both your parents and your other children. I thought how good it would be to just be able to 'go home' again, to lay my head in my mother's lap and cry like I used to do. This past Thanksgiving I did just that. She had been very quiet before and then she began to cry. We both came home.

-- A Dad in Michigan

From Our Members...



A Thanksgiving Prayer for Grieving Families

Please join our family on this Thanksgiving Day and bless each one as we sit down to pray,
As we remember those who have joined you above, so dearly missed and deeply loved
Please provide us strength on this Thanksgiving Day

Bless us with memories of those faraway...
Please grant patience to family and friends as we grieve
and help us reach out to others who are bereaved.
We give thanks to You on this Thanksgiving Day for your presence in our lives each and everyday.
For your comfort, guidance, and never ending love...
and for taking care of our loved ones...in Heaven above.
As we light this candle on this Thanksgiving Day...
and it glows in memory of those in Heaven today.

may their light always shine on us and give us light...
and may we feel their presence along with Yours tonight.
May the peace and tranquility of this Thanksgiving Day,
be an everlasting light within each of us along the way...
Let's bow our heads and give our thanks for compassionate friendship and love
and for our loved ones who reside in heaven above. Amen.

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

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: November 1 for December birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 and let me know. 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.tcfsbla.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 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
- Lori Galloway(chapter co-leader).....(760) 521-0096
- 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 3rd Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine:** (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim:** (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel:** (626) 919-7206
- Redlands:** (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire:** (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley:** (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
- South Los Angeles:** (323) 546-9755 last Tue
- Ventura Co. TCF:** (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
- Verdugo Hills:** (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

Local Support Groups...

FAMILY & FRIENDS OF MURDER VICTIMS: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

ALIVE ALONE: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Alivealone.org

SURVIVORS 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 (310) 483-8313.

Other Grief Support Websites...

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

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: Lori Galloway
- NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
- PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
- TREASURER: Ken Konopasek
- WEBSITE: Joe Zelik



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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

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.

Year-end Donation and Membership Update

Dear Family Members,

To keep our mailing list current, we do ask to hear from you each year making sure that our information is correct and that you still wish to receive the newsletter. As we near the end of the year, we are asking you to consider making a contribution to The South Bay/LA Chapter of Compassionate Friends. Our newsletter, phone line, website, outreach efforts and monthly sharing meetings are made possible by your generosity. TCF is a non-profit organization and your donations are tax-deductible. The continuation of this chapter's work depends on donations. They are vital to the continued operation of your group. If you have not taken the opportunity to give a donation in memory of your child in awhile, please consider taking this time to give a gift that will help reach out to other newly bereaved parents.

Please help in whatever way you can. We are deeply grateful for your kindness. If you prefer to not make a donation at this time, we still need everyone to fill out the rest of this form so we can update our contact information. This will assist us in keeping you updated for our newsletter, chapter events and activities. All information is strictly confidential.

Thank-You, Your Chapter Leadership

Please print clearly and complete the information below so we can update your information.

Name: _____ Child's name _____ Birth date: _____ Death date: _____
Child's name _____ Birth date: _____ Death date: _____

Please check any of following that apply:

- Yes, I wish to support the work of The Compassionate Friends and help grieving parents and their families by volunteering my time and/or contributing with a donation. I would be able to help by:
 - Setting up chairs before the meetings.
 - Sending birthday and anniversary cards.
 - Coming to a Steering Committee meeting to help plan topics and events.
 - Help co-lead a meeting.
 - Greet new members.
 - Help maintain the library.
 - Help clean up after meeting.
- I am enclosing a donation to support The Compassionate Friends in memory of:

 We do or We do not want an acknowledgment in the newsletter.
If you wish to add a tribute please fill out and enclose the regular donation page.

(Please make checks payable to: The Compassionate Friends South Bay/LA chapter)
and mail to: P.O. Box 11171, Torrance CA 90510

To make it easier for those who would rather donate online, just go to our website and use the donate button at www.tcfsbla.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.

- Please send my newsletters via email. My email address is _____.
- I prefer not to receive the newsletter via email and would like to continue having a hard copy sent to the mailing address you have on file for me. My mailing address and phone number are the same.
- Please update my mailing address: _____
E-mail address _____ And/Or phone _____
- I no longer need the newsletter. Please remove my name from the newsletter list.

Thank you for taking time to fill out this form and returning it to:
The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chapter, P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171

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 all of our children at Thanksgiving time...
We miss you and were blessed to have had you in our lives for the short amount of time we had. This time of the year brings up many feelings and emotions. It is my Thanksgiving wish for you, to join me in taking Allie Simms Franklin's famous quote to heart. She says "I challenge us all to refuse to allow the moment of their death to steal away the memories of their lives." This will take us one step closer to letting go of some of the pain, while remembering and treasuring the time with our loved ones.

With Love, The South Bay/LA chapter of TCF

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 fromFrom _____
Tribute _____

We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear if time permits.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510
– Return Service Requested –

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TORRANCE CA 90503



November 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, need corrections, or have a new address,
please contact us.