



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

March 2020 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be **March 5th, 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 March 5th meeting will start with "Why grieving differently can affect your marriage and your grief."

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

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

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Linda Zelik (310) 370-1645
Linelik@gmail.com
Lori Galloway (760) 521-0096
Lorijog01@gmail.com

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

The Thursday, **March 5th meeting** will start with **“Why grieving differently can affect your marriage and your grief.”** It may seem your spouse (whom you thought would understand what you are going through) is unable to help you with the pain caused by the death of your child. Most people find that you will not necessarily deal with your loss in the same way or time frame. This is normal and happens to most parents. This month we will start the meeting by offering insights into the different ways men and women face their grief. (Keep in mind that personality traits also come into play. You will probably see aspects of your way of grieving in both the way men and in the way women grieve differently.) We invite you to join us as we share different insights and pitfalls often encountered when individual grieving styles, and the stress it can put on a marriage, are added to your loss. Like all meetings, you are never required to talk, but we welcome you to express how you are feeling and share any concerns or questions you may be having in your own grief.

Grieving Your Own Way

Each of us is an individual. Each of us grieves in his or her own way. With certain variations there are generally two types of grieving: outward and inward.

The person who grieves outwardly will seek comfort through friends and relatives, books, and articles, and support groups. The outward griever may feel the need to go over the events of the death again and again, or keep the child's memory alive in special ways. The inward griever reacts quite the opposite. He or she may refuse to discuss either the child or the death. This silence may be misconstrued as a form of denial or indifference.

Each of these grieving reactions is quite natural depending on the personality of the individual. The problems arise when spouses are at opposite ends of the scale. The father who is an inward griever may become angry when his wife introduces the name of the dead child into a conversation. The mother who is an outward griever may believe her husband didn't love the child as much as she did because he keeps his emotions in check.

The death of a child is a traumatic experience and we expect others to react in the same way we do. If our spouse's grieving pattern differs from our

own, misunderstanding may arise causing anger and resentment.

The first way to ease the tensions that arise in a marriage when a child dies is to realize that husband and wife are each entitled to grieve in their own way. Simply understanding that your partner is reacting in a normal way for his or her own personality type will reduce your own anxiety. Grief is burden enough without feeling guilty because your emotions differ.

The second step toward healing is to recognize your own personality type. Are you an outward or an inward griever? If you are an outward griever, do not hesitate to seek support from outside sources. If you want to talk about your grief and your spouse refuses to discuss it, find a friend or group that will allow you to express your feelings.

If you are an inward griever, do not feel ashamed or guilty because you cannot bear to discuss your child's death. If the subject comes up in conversation and you don't want to participate, simply excuse yourself from the group and busy yourself with another task. If you do not mind

listening but do not want to take part directly, then listen and brush aside direct questions.

The most important thing to remember is that you have to grieve in the way that is right for you. Grief over the death of a child can be likened to drowning in a swimming pool. Each of you are struggling to keep your heads above water. To add to the dilemma, you are swimming in opposite directions. There is no way you can save each other. Attempting to do so will only drag you both under. You have to concentrate on saving yourself through whatever means possible.

The healing of grief is an individual process. Respecting the fact that your spouse's healing process differs from your own will reduce the strain on both of you. Treasure the moments when you are able to share your grief, but at the same time, allow each other the room to grieve individually, whether it be inwardly or outwardly.

--Michele Aprias, TCF Bay Area, TX

Voice

I've been pondering for some time the reasons why my husband and I have been able to weather the storm since the deaths of our two 16 year old sons, one in June '89, the other in Sept. '91. I think



the best comparison is that we were each in our own little rowboat tethered to each other with a very long rope, so that with every 12 foot swell neither of us was overwhelmed by the drenching waters. We were able to bail when needed, and were able to paddle to one another, but the rope was never too taught or loose.

Something worked, as we just had our 26th anniversary in Feb. So many bereaved marriages don't make it through the storm. This newsletter is therefore focusing on the bereaved marriage, in hopes that it can provide some tools for us to use to help us keep and promote a stable marriage, when it seems all else makes no sense. I wish you all the best.

--Val Mason, editor, TCF Pocatello, ID

Marriage at Risk ... The loss of a child can also lead to the loss of a marriage



Early in my work with grieving people, I learned about the distinct individuality of bereavement. It was then I coined the phrase, "Grief is a journey the heart makes alone." Each time I see two parents trying to come to terms with the loss of their child, that particular phrase rings a resounding truth for me again.

When a couple must face the death of a child and the aftermath of reality and readjustment, one might think the tragedy would naturally draw them closer. After all, they have lost a precious life. They both have suffered shock, mental anguish, despair, anger, guilt, helplessness, and loss of future dreams and plans.

Both parents are faced with a grieving process from which there is no escape. Both their lives have been drastically and irrevocably changed forever. And yet with all the sameness we can list, no two individuals will respond to this major life-changing event in quite the same way.

Each parent's brings to this event his or her own life experiences, emotional stability levels, ways of communication and expression, and very individual ways of coping with the prolonged stress that grief produces. Each parent's emotional investment is weighted differently. Each parent saw the child differently, their dependency needs and the position they assumed within the family structure had different values. Their love and their ambivalence toward their child comes from very separate places because no matter how

close parents are as a couple, they do not think alike nor do they approach the healing process of bereavement with a matched set of burdens.

While grieving, two parents may find themselves in opposite behavior styles. One may make wrongful assumptions about the other because they don't recognize that there are different ways to grieve. Not better nor worse; not right nor wrong; simply different.

Grief can be a powerful force with which to reckon. When individual patterns are resisted, misunderstanding can result in an irreparable rift between husband and wife. Research has indicated that about 83% of all couples have some serious marital problems after the loss of a child. There seems to be great difficulty in helping each other.

If a couple's communication process was less than ideal to begin with, the problems are now exacerbated. Often sexual expression which might have once drawn the couple closer, is affected by the distancing that occurs because of their different grieving styles.

Part of the problem stems from our acculturation process. Fathers are supposed to be the protectors of the family. They are considered controlling, strong and self-sufficient. Because we stereotype men in these ways, they reach adulthood thinking that the open expression of intense feelings is a sign of weakness. Loss of control is something that many men fear and they feel diminished by it.

The death of a child represents a sense of personal failure for a father and leaves him feeling helpless, angry, guilty and emotionally impotent. A high percentage of men try to remain stoic during bereavement, showing as little outward emotion as possible. They have a tendency to delete the deceased child's name from conversation at home. Many fail to respond to their wife's need to talk about the child by remaining aloof, quiet and unavailable.

Men often throw themselves into a frenzy of work or other activity which serves as a buffer for their emotions, as well as a physical release for the effects of sustained stress. It is not uncommon for a father to hold his wife, responsible for the death of their child. Even if he never verbalizes this thought, it can be evident in his manner of speaking and behaving.

To find fault or to blame another is one way

we deal with the painful feelings of failure. If lines of communication have been in good working order, they can usually be kept open during bereavement (if the parents are committed and willing to work together).

If communication has been strained or difficult, it will be unlikely to improve. Without good communication, grief can drive a wedge between partners and can eventually break them apart.

The grief of mothers manifests in a very different way. The role of women in our society dictates that the mother is a nurturing, care-giving and central figure in the family. One of her roles is that of communication. She communicates with each family member, and helps them to communicate with each other. Generally speaking she, carries the emotional burden of the family and she, more than the others, endeavors to create family unity.

When a child dies, the mother grieves not only for the loss of her, child but also for the loss of family balance. Each child has a separate, and very important role in the family structure. At a time when she feels powerless and vulnerable, her needs for nurturing may be greater than ever before. She may turn to her husband only to find him distant, repressed and incapable of offering consolation. These are two very separate and vastly different ways of coping with the same loss. And therein lies the problem. Fathers usually feel more comfortable and more able to be in control of their emotions by employing a non-verbal approach to grief. Mothers more often feel the need to talk, sometimes incessantly, about their child and about all the circumstances leading to the death. They may wish to fully express their emotions and have been told by society to cry.

The alienation caused by each parent's inability to share and to understand the other's way of grieving promotes isolation that often grows into an all consuming resentment. At the most difficult time of their lives, they find the one person they counted on for help has failed them. Their needs for comfort and caring concern go unmet and thus the distance between them grows at an alarming rate.

Now, that we are aware of what is likely to

happen in a marriage after the death of a child, what can be done to prevent this unwanted result? I have a formula that, if followed closely by two committed parents, will be effective: Get educated about grief and get help early.

I have found that the couples who seek information learn to understand each other. They learn to communicate well. They accept different forms of expression and they find ways to help each other so that each person's needs are met. They learn how to combat isolation and distancing and in doing these things they avoid the loss of their marriage. Not all couples need counseling after the loss of their child but every couple can use some education and some guidelines if they are to safely navigate some of the most troubled waters they will ever cross.

It is hard to be objective during a major life change and therefore many couples don't realize they need help until it is too late. Many parents feel that their grief is so unique that no one could possibly understand their pain. And while it is true that every grief process is an individual one, there are many common components. When these are shared with other parents, the emotional support that results can be highly therapeutic.

Try attending a few support group sessions. Attending only one session doesn't give you a chance to gather information, express yourself or feel comfortable. Commit to going at least three times consecutively before deciding if that is the group for you. Asking for help in "a time of crisis" is a sign of strength, not weakness, and it may make the difference between success or failure in a marriage where two parents strive to find ways of coping with their monumental loss.

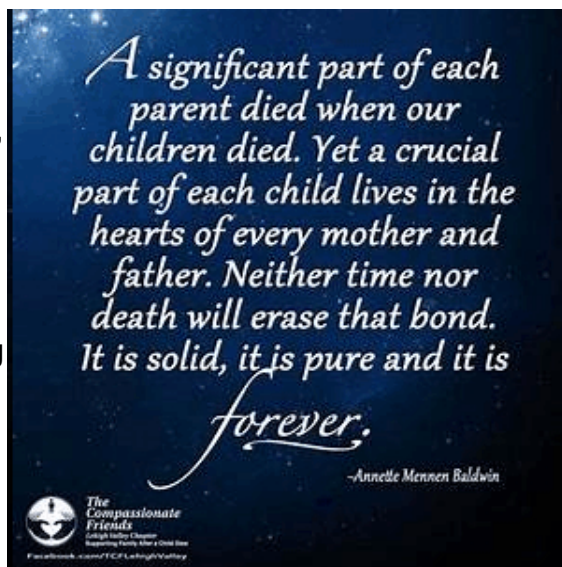
The following organizations are invaluable resources for recovery for grieving parents.

Please call or write the appropriate group for the location of your nearest chapter.

The Compassionate Friends, P.O. Box 3696 Oakbrook, IL60522 (877) 969-0010

HAND (Helping After Neonatal Death), P.O. Box 341, La's Gatos, CA 9503'1 (408) 732-3228

Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation 7910



Woodmont Ave., Suite 460, Bethesda, MD 20814 (800) 366-2223

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Center 5150 Candlewood Street, Suite 19F Lakewood, CA 90713 (310) 867-4989
The National SIDS Foundation 1314 Bedford Ave., Suite. 210 Baltimore, MD 21208 (800) 221-SIDS. (24 hr. Hotline)

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) 511 East John Carpenter Freeway., Suite 700 Irving, TX 75062 (800) 438-6233 (24 hr. Hotline)

Survivors of Suicide P.O. Box 1393 Dayton, OH 45401 (513) 297-4777 (24 hr. Hotline) or (513) 297-9096 (Group Information)

Parents of Murdered Children 100 East 8th Street, Suite B-41 Cincinnati, OH 45202 (513) 721- 5683
 --Margie Kennedy-Reeves, Ph.D.



The Myth Of The Grief Timeline

How long does it take to fall in love? How many seconds pass before a parent loves their newborn child? How many arguments and rivalries can the bonds of siblinghood withstand? How many sleep overs and phone calls before you know a friend is true? These are silly questions, aren't they? They're like riddles with no answer. There's no scale to measure love or to quantify the bonds of friendship and family.

So why then do we often hear questions like these:

"How long does grief last? When will it end? When will I be over it?" If grief is the result of losing someone we loved, cared for and/or connected with, then are these questions also just riddles with no answer? The idea of a grief timeline is somewhat of a misnomer. Anyone familiar with grief understands that associated feelings, setbacks, breakthroughs, roadblocks, triggers, and resolutions can occur at unexpected, unpredictable and inexplicable times and durations.

Grief is not a race with a start and finish line, it's a labyrinth with twists and turns and dead ends.

Grief is like trying to swim past the break in the ocean – you wade in but every once in a while a wave comes up and knocks you back a few feet. You're still deeper than when you started, but not as deep as you were before the wave hit. How long will it take you to get past the break? It depends on your strength, the ocean, the tide and the weather.

Grief cannot be mapped on a timeline, although 'Normal Grief' should be negatively correlated with time. This means the more time that passes, the less extreme and agonizing grief feelings should be. There will still be bad days, but overall it's average intensity will diminish. Feelings of grief will diminish, but not disappear. Grief is infinitas which means 'being without finish'. Grief doesn't end, but with time it should look different – more peaceful, hopeful, constructive and positive.

Here are a few small indicators you might be making progress in your grief. I find it important to note, you can take steps forward, yet still grieve your loved one. Just because you return to work, date, or decide to have a child does not mean you won't continue to grieve the person you lost. The capacity you have to be happy, enjoy life, and love others exists in addition to the love you feel for your deceased loved ones. Because love... love is infinitas.

- * You start to feel 'normal'.
- * You have more good days than bad.
- * You experience an increase in energy and motivation.
- * You remember memories fondly as opposed to experiencing them as grief triggers. You can constructively think about the loss of your loved one and the impact it's had on your life.
- * Your sleep patterns return to normal.
- * You experience feelings of optimism about the future.
- * Improvement in performance at work.
- * You're able to focus on personal health and well being.
- * You feel ready to date again, have more children, and/or make new friends.
- * Your relationships feel more functional and healthy.
- * You feel as though you are 'rejoining the human race'.
- * You feel ready to get out of the house.
- * You experience an increase in desire for emotional and physical intimacy

<http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/myth-grief-timeline>

The Month of March

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need to "shake" out our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow, a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see the result, as we have enjoyed the results of others' work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end result. That tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well, it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years.

We can believe that spring will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It's a nice dream. "To all things there is a season" and as life goes by, we simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that we risk losing, if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past. A part of learning to "accept the unacceptable" is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh



winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers. Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control to our response. Our choice is now only in the way we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our life and go on. We owe it to ourselves, Compassionate Friends, to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of Spring and put the "winter of our discontent" in its place ... now a part of our ongoing lives.

-- TCF, Houston NW Chapter

Thoughts From A Chapter Leader

Those of you who are involved in our support group know that we meet monthly to share our emotions, our experiences, our coping methods, and our ideas with other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

Every meeting is different. There are times when I come away feeling emotionally drained and there are other times when I come away feeling totally uplifted. Last month's meeting was uplifting and inspirational; it reinforced for me that sharing our experiences can be instrumental in our healing process.

In the early years of my grief journey, I rarely left a meeting without having learned something about myself and about my grief. My fears and doubts were allayed; my feelings were usually validated; my suspicions that I was becoming insane were relieved. By continuing to participate in our sharing groups, I gained perspective and recognized that I was beginning to heal.

Now that I am farther down the road, I am filled with hope when I witness our members reaching out to each other during our meetings. I observe a powerful network of understanding and compassion. Our newer members may not yet sense any hope, but I now know from experience that in time, the pain will soften and the grief will not be as intense.

I thought I would share with you a few of the many snippets of wisdom I heard at our last meeting:

- Our grief will always be there on some level. This

is not to say that we will always be consumed by it, as most of us are in the early years, but we will be forever changed and the grief will continue to surface as life moves forward.

- Most of us no longer sweat the insignificant, unimportant "small stuff". Most of us are now more understanding and compassionate. It is OK to be grateful for these "gifts".

- Our grief often gets worse before it gets better. It is important to keep taking care of our physical health and to express our feelings. Eventually, our grief will be more manageable.

- Sometimes it is best not to have expectations, whether these are expectations of how others should treat us, or expectations of our own behavior.

- We should not attach a time frame to our journey; we should not anticipate feeling better or worse. Our grief evolves and we have to learn how to ride with it.

- Family members and friends may want to support us, but we often have to be their "teachers".

- In the early years of our grief, we find ourselves mourning the death of our children, siblings and grandchildren. When we are no longer newly bereaved, we find ourselves celebrating their lives.

I am grateful for the collective wisdom of the members of our group. I encourage you all to continue to share.

--By Carmen, Chapter Leader TCF No Shore Boston

I Don't Know Why

I'll never know why.

I don't have to know why.

I don't like it.

I don't have to like it.

What I have to do is make a choice about my living.

What I do want to do is accept it and go on living.

The choice is mine.

I can go on living, valuing every moment in a way I never did before,

or I can be destroyed by it and, in turn, destroy others.

I thought I was immortal.

That my family and my children were also.

That tragedy happened only to others.

But I know now that life is tenuous and valuable.

So I am choosing to go on living,



making the most of the time I have, valuing my family and friends in a way never possible before.

..... from the book, *My Son, My Son*, by Iris Bolton, whose son Mitch died by suicide.

To Those Who Don't Understand Me

I know you think it's morbid that I have pictures of my stillborn daughter.

I know you think I'm crazy for hugging and holding a blanket to my chest.

I know you think I'm weird for not washing the cap she wore with the tiny streaks of dried blood upon it, and for putting it against my face to smell it.

I know you think I'm sick for dressing her and holding a funeral for her.

Now please let me tell you how I felt, and just maybe, you'll understand.

The pictures are all I have to look at since she is not here for me to see.

The blanket is the only thing I have to hug and hold since she is not here for me to hold and cuddle.

The cap has her scent and it was the only article of clothing that ever touched her skin, to wash it would be to take away her scent.

I had her dressed because she was a human being just like you and me at birth. I know I wouldn't want to be buried naked and so why should she?

I had a funeral for her because she was very much alive for nine months within me and I felt her life. She deserved to be acknowledged as a human being that departed from this world. She deserved this last farewell.

So, you see, I did all of these things to acknowledge her existence. If I didn't do these things it would be like saying she never existed and nine months of my life never existed.

It really doesn't matter what you think, it's what I think that matters because I'm the one that lost my daughter and I think that everything I did, and everything I do, is quite normal.

I do what comforts me and gets me through this loss! These things I did or do now from time to time to feel good, feels right to me and that is what's important.

--Shelley Beck TCF, Anne Arundel MD

Newly Bereaved...

Some Things You Need To Know

Grief waits:

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

For many, it is not even an option.

Even in death --- love remains.

~author unknown

Seasoned Griever...

More Than A Memory

I woke up today, seven years after Mandy died, and asked myself if all of this had been a bad dream. It didn't take long before I answered myself...no, it was not a dream. Why after so many years is her death so difficult for me to grasp? I keep asking myself that question over and over. I'm not really sure there are any answers, but here are my thoughts.

Yesterday and today, I have been focused on the hours leading up to that final time, the day before her death, her death, and the day after her death. In the first few years that was the routine, going over the day before she died with the family all gathered together, the day she died, and the day after she died. Like a broken record, over and over and over again. That was all I could see and hear and think about. Then, gradually that faded unless something reminded me. The fourth and fifth of February always brought those memories

up regardless of what I did or did not do. Time has not erased the memories, just softened, and blurred them.

After the first two or three years I was just better at disguising my feelings. Possibly that is because I got tired of people making remarks about the length of my grief, or just ignoring me altogether. Whatever the reason, after a while I noticed I was making it through the day without my insides in a tight wad and tears. That certainly does not mean I have forgotten our child, or that I no longer grieve. I will never forget our beautiful daughter, and grieving will be my forever life – just not the same as the first years.

Several weeks before my beautiful daughter died she told me that in five years she would be just a memory. I gasped and told that NO she would never be just a memory. I promised her she would always be real and constant in my life. She is. Yes, there have been times when she does fade, and then something will jog my mind and she is right there just like before. I do not believe my grief is any less than it was seven years ago, just very different. Mandy is not just a memory, she is as much in my mind and heart as my other children...and they are not memories.

Whatever the reason, there are some times when the grief is sharper and more intense. It may be a number on a calendar that remembers a special date, a smell of her favorite perfume that draws me away for a while, a song that takes my breath away remembering her, or a picture of the most beautiful smile in the world. All of these things, and many more, can once again cause the intense feelings, and yet they are wonderful – because I can honestly say that Mandy is not just a memory. She is real. As you walk along this path you will also realize your child is much more than a memory.

--♥Mary

Space Coast TCF, Florida

Friends and Family...



“Are You Over It Yet?”

“Are you over it yet?” you ask. I know you want to hear me say “Yes.” But in all honesty, no, I'm not over it and I don't expect I'll ever be over losing precious Schuyler and the trauma of seeing her die. “When does anyone ever get over losing a child? Heaven forbid that it should happen, but were you to lose your child, when would you be

“over it?”

“Are you moving on” you ask. Every day that I swing my feet out of bed, put on my clothes, and go about my daily tasks, then yes, I am “moving on.” How could I be otherwise? Life stands still for no one, and besides, I now have new work to do, the work of offering compassion to fellow bereaved parents.

“Will you ever have joy again?” you ask. Oh yes. In fact, I have joy right now. You see, I have both joy and deep mourning side-by-side in my heart. The joy comes from the happy memories of wonderful times Schuyler and I enjoyed. The deep mourning comes from my missing her so terribly, terribly much. Only another bereaved parent can come anywhere close to knowing how much I miss my sweet Schuyler.

“Are you okay now?” you ask. Is anyone ever “okay” after losing a child? No, I’m not really “okay” if by okay you mean “back to normal.” There is no “normal” after losing a child. All those things that once seemed important no longer seem so significant. My heart aches, as it should, given losing that dear little girl. But to answer your question, yes, I am as “okay” as I can be having lost beautiful, 22-month old Schuyler.

“Do you have hope then?” you ask. Oh yes, I have more than hope. You see, Schuyler came to us as a purely unexpected surprise, like a comet that slowly enters our vision, shines brightly for an all too brief time, and then passes over the horizon out of our sight. But I have assurance that when it is my time to cross over that horizon, I will see precious Schuyler fully healed and perfectly formed once again. It is well with my soul, and it is well with Schuyler’s soul. So, yes, yes, for sure I have hope.

“Is there anything I can do for you?” you ask. Oh yes. Say Schuyler’s name, please. Say it every time you see me. If you knew her, then tell me that you too have wonderful memories of her, and that like me you miss her terribly. If you did not know her, then tell me that you wish you had known her; tell me that you can see in my eyes the love that my heart carries for dear little Schuyler.

Oh, and thanks for asking, and thanks for caring. You have done me the greatest service anyone can do, for you see, today you have been my compassionate friend!

--by Norm Raiford TCF, Greenville SC Chapter

Welcome...



Compassion

I cry, when a tear rolls down your cheek
I agonize when you weep.
I know that you question, I know that you pray,
That you scream at night in your sleep.
I'm aware of your quavering voice when you speak,
Of your blank, straightforward stare,
I know of your pain, your depression, your guilt
That you search for "a face" everywhere.
I watch as you walk with your head bowed low
With despair written over your face.
I hear the quick sign, the internal cry
I know how, you wearily pace.
I see how you search, for a sign, for some hope
That the light will still shine in your life.
I know how you live, I know that you die
From the harsh words that wound like a knife.
I empathize most with your loneliness now
Even though you're not always alone.
I see the rapture as you speak your child's name
For I've lost a son of my own.
-- Charmaine Stickel TCF Pittsburgh, PA
Editor's note: We welcome you to our meetings and hope you find the understanding and shared advice of other bereaved parents helpful. Try attending a couple of meetings before deciding if TCF is right for you. Each meeting is different and the thoughts of other parents who can truly appreciate the depths of your pain is beneficial in your healing.

Helpful Hint...



“We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child.”
--Annette Mennen Baldwin

Books in Review ...



Dear Parents: Letters to Bereaved Parents from Bereaved Parents, by Joy Johnson. This is a support group in book form. It is a collection of

letters from bereaved parents to bereaved parents with other helpful information. Some of the people who wrote are Sauni Wood, Susan Evans, Karen Fulcher, Martha Clark, Marie Teague, Denise Gleason, Marion Cohen, Darcie Sims, Marilyn Gryte, Sherokee Ilse, Erma Bombeck, Janice Harris Lord, Sister Jane Marie Lamb, Martha Eise, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Earl Grollman, Dean Koontz and Joseph Wambaugh. Each page will tell you what other bereaved parents and siblings went through and how you can cope. It is filled with compassion and love. These and other grief books available from The Centering Corp. (866) 218-0101

Is It Easing?

I heard your name today and my heart did not skip a beat, nor was my mind flooded with the emotion of losing you.

I heard your name today and it did not bring back the terrible hurt feelings of when you first left me.

I heard your name today with a calmness that surprised me. Many another child carried your name, and it had been torture hearing it and seeing the smiling faces on those little girls.

But today I know. I found out what others in my footsteps found out and tried to tell me.

The hurt will ease; but the memories, the love, the good times will never go away.

—Phoebe C. Redman, TCF Bradenton FL

March Winds

He raced against the wind as if his very life depended upon it.

Eyes bright, cheeks glowing from the still almost chilly March wind,

Throwing me a smile now and then to make sure I was watching.

I was,

and when I caught a smile I applauded.

His effort so great for one small boy.

I don't remember now if his kite ever flew —

Sometimes, in spite of heroic efforts, they don't.

But I remember the day,

the nip in the air, his cheeks glowing, his fresh, clean smell,

My afternoon of playing catch with his smiles...

I remember every year,

when March winds begin to blow.



Even if he had not died long after the age of flying kites,

I still would remember.

Maybe if he were still here, teaching his own small boy the delicate art of flying kites, and catching his own smiles, it wouldn't hurt so much, When March winds begin to blow.

--from Songs from the Edge by Faye Harden

The People Who Stayed (a Looking-Back Prayer)

With full hands
and empty eyes,
they appeared at your door.

Friends from work,
people from church,
the friends of your child
who knew your son or daughter
in ways you never will,
and their parents.

Old friends.

New friends born of loss.

Family members
battling their own blinding pain
often turned into friends, even better.

One time someone said,
"I don't know what to say,"
which was the best thing that day.

They came with full hearts,
open ears, a mouth sharing
recall, remembrance, memories,
hesitant, gentle words, a laugh.

Could they sense we were crossing
into a new, separate land,
fearful, uncertain, unable to return?

Even those who said too much,
made incorrect assumptions,
thoughtless remarks,

took time to come,
and taught us something.

God, if I'm anything after all this,
let me be a person
who can walk up to the door,
a person who stays.

--Carol Thompson Always Remembering Sarah
5/27/2019

Perhaps it is not so much saying GOOD-BYE
to our loved one as it is saying farewell to the
old us and the life we shared.

--Darci Sims FOOTSTEPS



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

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

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

Cheianne Jayda Berry
Born: 12/01 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 Trillegi & 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

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

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

Cody Jarod Esphorst
Born: 3/02 Died: 7/19
Parents: Jesse & Julie Esphorst

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

Chidinma Ezeani
Born: 8/89 Died: 10/19
Mother: Ifeoma Ezeani

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

Mark 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 Guerrevia
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

Chase King
Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19
Mother: Laura King

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

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

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

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

Sarah Mc Donald
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17
Parents: Tom & Shideh Mc Donald

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

Jeremy Stewart 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

Keith Moilanen
Born: 10/80 Died: 5/19
Mother: Jill Moilanen

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: Desireé Palmer

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

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

Carlos Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 1/12
Parents: Antonia & Refugio Valdez

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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.

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 for Alex J. Mantyla Mar. 1989- Aug. 2008



Happy Birthday, Alex! It's hard to believe that it's been 31 years since you changed our lives forever. From your first day with us until your last, you brightened our world. We still miss you every day, but the nineteen years we shared with you were so joyous and bright that we still feel your light everyday. Alex, we're aware of your presence always. Thank you for watching over us.

Love, Mom and Dad

For Siblings...



Courage

My brother died three years ago when he was seventeen years old. It was an accident when he fell while hiking in the mountains. I was fifteen and my brother was my hero. I would do anything to make him proud. When I lost him, I could have just given up. I have the courage to love people even though I know that I could lose them. I had many opportunities to just forget everyone else and lose myself. My brother was my best friend and when he died I could have too.

I decided that he would not have wanted me to throw my life away. I try my hardest to work hard

in school and live up to what his expectations would have been. I am not living just for him. I am living for myself.

A lot of people like to escape their problems by drinking or doing drugs. Alcohol and drugs only make problems worse because escaping a problem is not solving the problem. Self-respect means knowing who you are and treating yourself with dignity. I want people to look at me and to respect me. Staying in school and working to my potential is essential for respect. People cannot respect those who do not respect themselves. As Shakespeare said, "This above all else, to thine own self be true."

I do not make choices based on what the popular decision is. I base my thoughts and ideas on what I believe is right and important. I know that my brother would have been proud of me, because I made it through the most difficult time in my life, without him. I kept living when I lost the most important person in the world to me.

Courage is to keep fighting even though it looks like you are going to lose. When he died, I felt the world crash down on me. Everything I ever hoped for just seemed empty. Even now sometimes it will just hit me that my brother is gone. I have to keep on living and facing the world because that is what life is all about. Sometimes things happen that seem impossible to face. If I do not face my problems, who will?

Life is not supposed to be easy but it is not devastating either. There are so many wonderful things that happen and I have to have the courage to realize it. Life is not just a long line of problems. It is also a long line of answers. I need courage and self-respect to find these answers. I have to trust myself and my future that everything will work out. It always does. The answers to life's problems can only be found through hard work and belief in yourself. My belief in myself comes from a big brother who always had faith in me.

--Patricia Kelley TCF Richmond, VA
In Memory of my brother, Sean

Celebrating Life Is A Better Way to Cope with Death

Today marks a week since my youngest brother's birthday. But instead of recalling memories of the family all here together eating cake and ice cream and celebrating the joyous occasion, my mind conjures up images that only

seem to surface twice a year, on Jeffrey's birthday and on the anniversary of his death.

Seven years ago Jeffrey committed suicide. Though I was only 14 at the time and so many years have passed since his death, when his birthday rolls around each year, so does the pain. Today, however, is my last day for mourning. About three years ago I decided that instead of fighting back my emotions or feebly attempting to act as though everything is okay, on his birthday and on the anniversary of his death, I would allow myself a week to mourn and heal.

I have even developed a ritual: On these two occasions I dress all in white, sit in a private place with the lights turned off, put on Bette Middler's "Wind Beneath My Wings" (the song she sang in the movie "Beaches", right after her best friend died), light a single white candle, and sort through old photographs of Jeffrey and the family.

The color white, for me, has always represented light, rebirth, and newness. So wearing all white is my way of saying, "Instead of mourning his death, I will celebrate his life." "Lighting a single candle stems from our Catholic faith. It is a way of showing that the fire of his spirit is still alive. And with the heat of the candle I can feel the warmth of his presence.

Listening to Midler's song helps me say all the things I didn't get a chance to say. Especially when I carefully listen to the words and realize how much they apply to Jeffrey and me. The song seems to have been written for us.

When we were younger, I was the star of the family. The straight-A student who sang in the church choir and excelled in academic and athletic competitions. Jeffrey was the quiet one. He was reserved, an average student, and spent most of his time reading or practicing Ninjitsu. So it was no surprise that I commanded most of the attention from my parents.

This didn't seem to bother Jeffrey, however. He was easy going, a good listener, and best of all, he always supported me in everything I did. I thought he was the perfect brother. Losing him was extremely hard for me.

Everyone kept telling me to cry and let out the grief I was feeling. Someone even said that a year from now I wouldn't remember how painful this experience was. But even now I remember how hard it was to return to school and my everyday life and pretend that everything was fine, acting as though I was dealing with his death and would be okay. I know they meant well by sharing their

condolences and advising me on the best way to deal with my grief. But in the end I realized that no one could truly understand what I was going through, and their remedies for relief may have worked for them, but for me, I needed something more.

The first birthday after his death was especially hard, and I dealt with it in a very different way than I do now. I spent the entire month wearing black, closing myself off from everyone around me, and crying every time I had the inclination. I don't regret dealing with his death that way, but I do find solace knowing that seven years later, I can silently mourn, without wearing black, without shutting myself off from the outside world, and without wearing a mask of happiness.

I have healed at my own pace and in my own time. And I understand now, that is the only advice I could ever give someone experiencing a similar tragedy. Take your time and deal with it in your own way. Only your way is the right way.

Now I deal with Jeffrey's death the best way I know how - by celebrating his life. And in that, I am at peace.

--Karma Lowe TCF, Lake Jackson, TX

On Second Thought....

Dear Lord,

You don't know me. We've never talked. It's not that I don't believe in You— it's just I never really included You in my life. Now I'm here asking a favor.

You see, my little brother was killed the other day— so he'll be seeing You soon.

I never took the time to tell him how much I loved him or how much he meant to me.

When you see him, will You tell him for me— on second thought— never mind; I think he knew it all along, he was that kind of guy. Thanks anyway, Lord.

--Cheryl Larson, TCF, Pueblo Ark Valley Pueblo CO



Siblings will take different paths and life may separate them.

But they will forever be bonded by having begun their journey in the same boat.

For Grandparents...



Someone Stole Our Joy Today

Someone stole our joy today
and left a lot of pain
They took away the sunshine
and left a world of rain.
The hope that filled our world
Just crumbled into dust.
Now we must face a broken heart
In what we used to trust.
The warmest smile we ever knew
Lit up that little face.
How can we go on living
In this cold and lonely place.
And now he is with Jesus
Our angel is up above.
He left us all so suddenly
And took with him our love.
The only hope there is today
Is one day we will be.
Together in that glorious place
For all eternity.

--written by Grandma Irene

From Our Members...



A Father's Prayer

I am a man, God, and I have been taught that I should be strong and show no weakness. My wife needs me to be strong; I cannot and I must not be weak and lean on her. It is only with you that I can be honest, Lord, and even with you I am ashamed to admit it, but I want to cry.

I can feel the tears securely dammed up behind eyes that want to burst. There is a voice in me that shouts, "BE STRONG! BE A MAN! SHOW NO WEAKNESS! SHED NO TEARS!" But there is another voice inside that speaks softly and somehow I feel it is your voice, Father. Is it you who tells me that I am also a feeling human being who can cry if I need to? Is it your voice that tells me that maybe my wife needs the tenderness of my tears more than she needs the strength of my muscles?

You are right, Lord, as always. My wife needs to see my grief, she needs to feel the dampness of my tears and know the aching in my heart. Then, just as we became one to create this life, we become one in our grief which mourns this

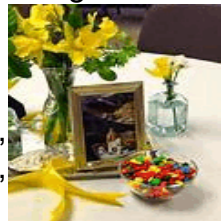
death. I think I understand now, Lord, it is in sharing the awful pain of my grief that I become an even stronger man. It is in sharing my tears that I share my true strength. Oh God, help me communicate my deepest and most sensitive feelings to my wife so we may become whole together.

--by Norman Hagley, Submitted by Linda Curtis

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

Welcome New Members ... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, and the next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.

Birthday Table... In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or whatever remembrance you choose in memory of your child. Our child's, grandchild's, or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others. Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday month and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos.



Newsletter 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: March 1st for April birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



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.

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.

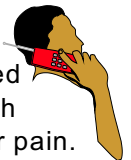
Library Information... At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found 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. Register now! CCZ offers FREE one-day family programs, community programs, and 3-day weekend camps. All programming empowers children to grieve, heal, and grow in healthy ways.

Our weekend camps provide children with the opportunity to break their isolation and realize they are not alone in a fun and healing environment. Grief evolves with each developmental stage a child reaches, so learning to manage grief in a healthy way is important at every age. Whether the child's loss was ten years or three months ago, encourage them to attend – you may have an opportunity to change the course of their life.

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

alivealone.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 CO-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.

The 43rd TCF National Conference will be in held in Atlanta, GA on July 24-26, 2020. "Sharing Sweet Memories of Love" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. We'll keep you updated with details here, on the national website as well as on our TCF/USA Facebook Page and elsewhere as they become available. For now, save the date.



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 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.

No donations were received this month.
Please consider giving a donation to help our chapter.

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

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

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

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ Sent from _____

Tribute _____

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 in the following issue.

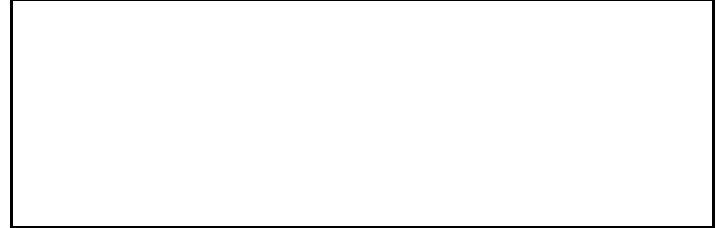
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South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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Torrance, CA 90510

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March 2020

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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.