



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

April 2020 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be April 2nd, 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 April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will start with “**My Journey Through 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.

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The Thursday, **April 2nd meeting** will start with **"My Journey Through Grief..."** While everyone grieves differently, we all struggle with basic questions about grief. Each relationship with the deceased child was unique and so our grieving pattern will be unique. But there are many basic emotions and beliefs that we all must face. When you are newly bereaved it is all you can do to get through the day filled with pain, uncertainty, guilt, depressing thoughts, anger, sadness and the many emotions you are feeling right now. How long will this last? Will I ever feel hope or happiness again? Will my family get through this hell we are living in intact? What can I do to FIX THIS? I can't do this, it just hurts too much!! These are all common feelings in grief. Join us this month as we share our thoughts about our individual journey through grief.

### Dear Survivor: A Letter To You

It is said that death is part of life; that it is the other side of birth. I believe that death can also give meaning to life, a meaning that may escape you now while your grief is fresh and raw, but which may someday bring a special quality of peace to your spirit.

As terrible as your loss seems now, you will survive it even though that may seem unbelievable right now. Once that happens, you will have touched upon a new and incredible inner strength. But for now you may be a mixture of thoughts and feelings. Despair, longing, anger, guilt, frustration, questions and even understanding, tumble over each other, striving for but not quite reaching comprehensible sense and shape.

You seek relief — you need to heal. It is a journey, and you must work on it. And so, cry. The pain is real, but the tears are healing. Often we must struggle through an emotion to find the relief beyond. And so, talk. Talk to each other about your loss and pain. Don't hide or deny real feelings. Tell others that you need them. The more you deny something or address it in silence, the more it can claim destructive power over you. And so, search.

Over and over, you will ask "Why?" It is a question you must ask. Though you may never find an answer, realize that it is still important to wrestle with the "why" question for a time. Eventually, you will be content to give up the search. When you can willingly let go of the need to question "why," it will lose its hold over you,

but it will take time. And so, speak.

Speak as often and freely of your loved one as you need to. He or she will always be a part of you. Not to speak of the deceased denies his or her existence. To speak of the deceased affirms his or her life. Believe that in time, the pain of loss fades and is replaced by precious memories to be shared. And so, grieve.

This time of sorrow can be used to draw a family together or pull it apart. You may be one who needs to feel and express guilt so that eventually you will gain a more balanced view of your actual responsibility. You may need to give yourself permission to feel and express anger even though you think it's inappropriate. And so, grow.

We know we cannot control all that happens to us, but we can control how we choose to respond. We can choose to overcome and survive it. When we choose to grieve constructively and creatively, we come to value life with a new awareness. And so, become.

Become the most you can become. Enter into a new dimension of self-identity and self-dependence as you come to love others more fully and unconditionally. In letting go of love, we give it freedom to return to us. Become all that your loved one's death has freed you to become. And so, accept.

Accept that in some strange way, his or her death may enable you to reach out with a new understanding, offering a new dimension of love to others. I believe in a loving God Who is with us, offering strength, guidance and solace as we struggle with our anguish. I believe as we regain balance and meaning in our shattered lives, we can come to see that death can indeed bring a new meaning to life. This is my prayer for all of us.  
--by Eleanora Ross in Bereavement Magazine

### GUILT! How Do I Handle The Torment Of Guilt?



If you feel guilt it is helpful to admit it to yourself. Ask yourself why you feel guilty. Be truthful with your answer.

What things specifically bother you the most. Talk over your feelings of guilt with a caring non-judgmental friend or professional. Guilt needs to be talked about and not glossed over nor pushed down. Talking about your guilt will help you to let it go.

There is so much that we tried to do, and things we did not do. Try not to blame yourself for things that you did not know you were mishandling. Accepting our imperfections aids us in working out our guilt. As humans we can not be perfect.

Realize that sometimes you are powerless and can not control everything that happens. You do not have to find somebody or something to blame. Do you want to live with guilt for the rest of your life?

Forgive yourself: ask for the forgiveness of your loved one and of God. Find comfort in your religion and know God always forgives even when we find it difficult to forgive ourselves.

Don't be afraid or embarrassed to talk about your feelings of guilt with those who have been trained to help.

Consider that your loved one would not want you to continue to suffer from guilt and grief. Concentrate on the special times that you had with your loved one and remember forgiveness is the key.

Try writing about your thoughts and feelings of guilt.

Volunteer - in helping others you help yourself. This gives new meaning to your life.

Something's are beyond our handling, coping or correcting. Perfect relationships is a role beyond realistic capability. It is helpful to realize you did the best you were able to do under the circumstances. You had no training and by trial and error you did the best you could. A person's best may vary from day to day depending on life's other pressures and involvement's.

Remember, many bereaved people initially feel guilty but their guilt does lessen with effort on their part and with the perspective of time.

--author unknown

## When Does Grief End?

Grief hits us like a ton of bricks,  
flattens us like a steamroller,  
hurls us into the depths of despair.  
We know in a flash when grief hits,  
but when does it end?

Like the month of March,  
grief rushes in like a lion  
and tiptoes out like a lamb.

Sometimes, we don't know when grief leaves,  
because we won't let go of the lion's tail.

Why do we hold on so long?

Grief offers us safety,  
protection from the world.

We don't want to let go  
because we secretly fear  
that we'll forget our loved ones,  
and we don't want to forget – ever.

We don't want to let go  
because we fear the future  
and having to face life without our loved ones.  
We don't want to let go because we make the  
mistake of measuring our grief with the depth of our  
love –

when neither has anything to do with the other.  
How do we know when grief has run its course?  
How do we know when we've grieved enough?  
Cried enough?  
"Died" enough?

How do we know when it's time to let go of the tail?  
We know when we feel joy again, in something or  
someone.

Joy in living. Joy in life.

We know when we wake up in the morning and our  
first thought is on something other than our loss.

We know when we look ahead with a smile  
and back with fond memories,  
and when we no longer dread the nights.

We know when our life starts filling up with new  
interests and people,

and we start reaching for the stars

Grief ends when we let go of the tail.

--Margaret Brownley, Bereavement Magazine

## Out Of Order

I went to buy a soft drink from a vending machine, the other day, and found a note taped over the coin slot that read "Out of order." I found that slightly amusing. As a bereaved parent I've come to understand that phrase to mean in the wrong sequence, i.e., no parent should outlive his child. After considering that thought for a few minutes I realized the meaning on the note was actually correct. After all, we are broken, aren't we? Isn't that what this out-of-order death has done to us? Has it not left us broken without much hope for repair? Like Humpty-Dumpty we knew instinctively it was going to take more, a lot more, than "all the kings' horses and all the kings' men" before we would ever feel even a glimmer of happiness again.

Somehow, though, it does happen. Sharing our story with others and letting them share their loss



with us, reading as much as we can by those who have also buried a child, attending support group meetings, allowing ourselves to grieve, crying and being sad as often or as long as we need, finding a way to honor the memory of our precious child and remembering to take care of ourselves will eventually begin to put the pieces back together. Some of the pieces won't fit the way they used to. And one piece of our hearts will remain missing. In time, however, we will emerge anew. When that time comes we will, once again, be able to embrace life.

My wish for you is that that time comes soon.

—from A JOURNEY TOGETHER,

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

## Two Years Later

I remember those first days, waves of sorrow rolling up in me, devastation just beyond the door.

The tears that burned so very badly, coming in uncontrollable gushes— and then nothing.

The never— leaving pain in your chest that reminds you, you are alive.

The amazing ability to function in life despite mental non-participation.

I have cried a river of tears.

I have bounced with Positive Attitude.

I have philosophized till my brain hurt.

I have tried with all my will to accept, though I'm still not sure I know what that means.

And yet I still hurt.

There is still a space in me that pulsates with all the unbearable things— my own Pandora's box, acceptably easy to ignore.

I should be telling you that the pain, the hurt and the loneliness goes away with the sands of time, cleansing your soul and making you whole again.

And I imagine for the very brave this is true.

But for me, it's been a matter of learning how to live with the hurt— handling some, ignoring the rest.

I don't know that there will be a day that I can release that last bit of pain, open that box and stand strong against its blows.

I have been told that I am a person who does not feel too deeply.

And I have been told that I wear a hard shell.

These two things are equally true.

It has been my choice to feel only part of the pain, even at the cost of part of the laughter— and maybe a notable numbness that does not go away.

It is my belief that there is no limit to the emotions we are capable of feeling, save human endurance.

--Laura House, TCF - St. Louis Chapter



## Shared Thoughts On How Death Changes Our World

Sometimes grief is more comfortable when we can hide out in the winter. It seems to be a more acceptable season to be lethargic, low-spirited, and less productive. Now, that the dormant plants are popping up, preparing for their glorious showing, it can add to our depression. We can not match the energy, proudness, or courage the blossoms display as they return to show off their beauty. We often feel if anything is going to return to life again, it should be our child or sibling. Spring can cause resentment, when there are no signs of our loved ones returning to life.

For those of us who believe in eternal life, Easter offers much hope, and is paramount in accepting the death of our child or sibling. But, that does not erase our missing, yearning anger, and all those human emotions we experience when the separation of our child or sibling takes place. It is very difficult when they precede us in death. Most of us don't even try to understand or find reason in it.

Our world changed when that special loved one entered our lives, they became part of our reason for living. When they left, our world became shattered. Time to grieve and lament over our loss is important. Time and distance alone doesn't heal. As painful as it is, we need to remember their living, loving, and impressions they left on the world, and particularly on us.

Facing the profound sadness that we have to live without our child seems an impossible task, and to expect to enjoy life again is out of our realm of thinking.

Grief seems to intensify everything we are. This can cause our anger, impatience and emotions to get in our way of daily living. It can erode our trust and destroy our self-esteem. It is impossible for us

to be at our best for communicating with those around us. Particularly, when we appear outwardly in control, and give a false impression to those trying to help us.

It takes a lot of healing to become functional again. Healing is loving again, both ourselves and others. There are those who can help us get through our tragedy, but it needs to be someone who can share our sorrow, not those we have to shelter from our pain. It is very important that we express our gratitude for their concern, so they know what is helpful to us.

For those fresh in their grief, barely getting through each day, it is impossible to envision ever reinvesting in life again. I know, for I have been there. But the pain does soften, and some day, you too, will be glad there is a tomorrow. Life will never be the same, but it can be productive, rewarding and I hope you will one day look to your future with anticipation for what it holds for you. But, for now, my thoughts and prayers are with you as you struggle with your pain. God Bless,  
--Marie Hofmockel, TCF Valley Forge

### Happy Passover

Jews throughout the world celebrate the holiday of Passover, which is called our favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph, as well as tears. Perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved one more than at Passover. As we gather around the Passover table, we cannot help but recall those who were so dear to us and are with us here no more. We recall them in friendship and love, for Passover is the time of family service. But even as we mourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.

--Rabbi Earl Grollman



### Easter Means Forever

Today I want to write a few lines about Easter and life after death, a subject of profound interest to everyone, young and old. At Easter we commemorate the supreme mystery of life; we reaffirm the glorious hope that life is eternal. An immortal parable to me is the most satisfying



illustration on the subject of life after death. It has to do with a baby in a pre-natal state. The baby is nestled up under his mother's heart, well fed and happy. He likes it there. Suppose, then, that somebody comes to the baby and tells him, "You're not going to stay here. You're going to be born," and he learns that being born means he would leave this warm, secure place. That would not be "being born" to him. That would be "dying," for dying is considered an end. And the baby would say, "I don't want to die out of this place. I like it here. I'm warm, I feel love all around me, I'm happy and content. Just leave me alone. I don't want to leave this nice place." But there comes a day when he is born ... or looking at it from his angle ... when he dies out of that place and is born into our world.

What happens to him? The first thing, he feels soft, tender, loving hands gently holding him. He looks up into a wonderful face that is full of love, and loving eyes are shining down at him. Then as he grows he has the fascinating experiences of childhood and young manhood, and the future is before him. He feels strong. It is good to be alive. He marries and has children. He becomes middle-aged, is creative and happy, and life is good; indeed the world is good. He loves it.

Then the years begin to add up. His hair becomes white and his step a bit feeble. And he knows he has to die, to leave all this and go away into another place, some uncertain place that is mysterious to him.

And once again he protests, "I don't want to die! I like it here. I love to feel the warmth of the sun on my face, the softness of rain, the bite of snow. I love to see great blue-shrouded mountains shouldering out the sky. I love to watch the ocean washing upon soft shores of sand. I love to be with my family and friends. Life is good. I don't want to leave here." But, as it happens to all humanity, one day he does die to this world.

What happens then? Does God all of a sudden change in nature? That doesn't make sense. Isn't it reasonable to believe that the first thing man will feel is the touch of great, loving hands, that he will look up into a face that is infinitely loving, and he will look around him wonderingly, and his breath will be taken away by the beauties that he sees? All tears will be wiped from his eyes and he will ask, "Why was I so afraid of this thing called death, when as I now see, it is life more wonderful than ever before?" And he will be forever alive.

THAT IS WHAT EASTER  
REALLY MEANS.  
IT IS A FAITH, A HOPE.

But when you really think it through, it also is a very rational conclusion.

--Norman Vincent Peale

### **I Don't Think I Like My New Home**

I live in a house of suicide now,  
I don't want to live here anymore,  
I don't want the hurt  
I don't want the confusion  
I don't want the sadness  
I don't like this house I live in now  
I wish suicide hadn't moved into my house  
My house was so much nicer before it came  
In my house we used to laugh more  
In my house we used to joke more  
In my house I used to like getting the mail  
In my house I used to think nothing of doing laundry  
In my house I used to like everything about our house  
Now I have to work at getting used to my new house  
I have two rooms that I don't feel the same about  
I have a room that makes me ache for what was  
I have a room that makes me ache for what happened  
I have things in my home that suicide changed  
All the simple things that suicide made hard when it moved in  
I wish suicide hadn't moved into my house  
I just hurt and I want it to go away now.

--Sherry Daugherty, TCF/St. Paul Chapter  
Sherry's son, Brad took his life in her home, in their basement one pretty Saturday morning in August. This poem was written by her about 17 weeks after his death.

### **A Father's Love For The Daughter He Lost**

Dear Kelly,

It has been a few days since we lost you, and I know that I will not find peace until I say the things that could not get past the lump in my throat in the precious little time we had together.

I realized from the moment you entered the world that I would never be able to hold you close, to rock you to sleep, and to proudly watch you grow. When I first saw you through the maze of plastic tubes and beeping machines that kept your body

going despite its disordered chromosomes, my impulse was to build a shell of detachment. I wanted so much not to look at you up close, fearing that, when the time did come to let you go, I would be unable to hold myself together. But, as soon as I walked across that room full of tiny babies and strange machines, I fell in love with you. You became a person. My little girl, I wanted desperately to touch you, and to let you know that everything was all right because Dad was there.

But I still could not bring myself to make that first contact. I just quivered and stared at you, torn between an urge to run out of the nursery and a desire to stay by your side until it was over, no matter how long it took.

I recall a nurse speaking to me while I stood over you. I ignored her. I hope she didn't think I was rude. Words that would have formed a reply had simply crumbled into inaudible dust somewhere inside my emotions.

Your dad did pretty well up to that time. It was only after I said good night to you and found an empty washroom that the tears came. They were the first of many.

After your mom finally went to sleep that first night, I took a long, slow drive home. I still had to tell your little brother that the sister he was waiting for was very sick. I realize now that we adults do not give kids credit when it comes to understanding what we're trying to tell them. You, in the form of a plastic baby doll, slept in your brother's tight embrace that night.

The frequent but short visits with you were both the highlight and the low point of each day. Touching, watching, crying, loving, and fearing - all while you lay there searching the room with wandering eyes. How many times I prayed that you would not close those beautiful eyes. How many times I prayed that I would have the strength to catch those eyes with mine and hold them while the misery swelled within and washed you from my sight.

Yes, baby, when I looked into your eyes and saw party dresses, curls, and boyfriends I did not approve of, I cried for you. But I also cried for myself.

As we approached the final day, you became more inseparable from us. Even though we could see that you were rapidly slipping, we could not accept that what we knew was so near. The high caliber minds and warm, caring hearts of the hospital staff were no match for what nature had



denied you.

My own body ached under the siege of emotions, anguish, denial and, yes, rage. The night before you died, I found myself running the deserted city streets harder than I can remember ever having done. I punched bags, walls, and floors until my body was numb. I came to rest sobbing uncontrollably on a cold garage floor, too tired to continue swinging and too far gone to grab for a piece of sanity.

You see, Kelly, the years that your dad the cop spent building a professional armor against pain weren't any help that night. I cannot recall, nor do I believe that I will ever surpass, the heartache that your mom and I carried into that last day. As we prayed over you with our minister, we finally realized that you were ready to begin your journey.

You were moving away from us forever. Although I cannot believe it now, I suppose it's true that time will mute my pain and blur your image. But the sight of your mom holding you close for the last time and crying softly as she stroked your head, will remain burned into my soul.

Please, forgive me for not being able to take you into my arms as your mom did. I was sure that I would have lost my mind. To comfort your mom, to hold your hands, to touch your face, and to weep unashamed as I said good-bye was barely within the furthest limits of my heart's endurance.

Later that night I told your brother that you would not be coming home. He also cried for you. He is only a little boy, but in his way he loved you, too, even though he never had a chance to see you.

You would be proud to know that in your brief stay with us you left a strong family stronger. We are thankful that we had the opportunity to know you as our daughter, not a nameless stillborn. Somehow, the day-to-day problems don't seem as important as before.

Soon we will plant a living tribute to you and your profound effect on us - a strong, beautiful tree that will grow and blossom, as you would have. And, just as I plan to open the 1976 Cabernet when your brother reaches 21, your mom and I will crack an '82 when the appropriate time comes.

Yes, sweetheart, I accept now that you are at peace. In time, I hope to find mine. Good-bye, Kelly. I love you.

--Dan Milchovich is a detective in the Inglewood, CA, Police Department. Article from The L.A. Times

## Newly Bereaved ...

### No Time For Good-byes

I left the hospital like a zombie, with little recollection of how I drove the thirty miles home.

The car soon became my "raging place". I found I could cry and scream without disturbing anyone else. So I screamed. The vocal noises sounded eerie, like a wounded wild animal. I did not know where they came from or who they belonged to, only that they needed to come out.

Weekly, I drove to the therapist. I passed smiling people, and wondered what there was to smile about. The "if only's" haunted me. I felt like a rat in a Kubler-Ross laboratory. Trapped in a grief-maze with no way out, I bounced from one stage to another-and back again. I made monthly pilgrimages' with floral tokens to the remote hill and screamed, "WHY?"

As I sat in the Mental Health waiting room I could observe other patients and identify with their individual pain. Although I had previously done social work, this was a new chapter in empathy. They were no longer separate from "me." It was "us... the human condition creating the common denominator.

It was four months before I began to let go. Suddenly, I became aware of what the inside of the therapist's office really looked like. I had never noticed the plants or the furniture, and thought that they were new.

I came home and put together a brick/rock pathway, and felt good for the first time in months. I remembered from somewhere that depression was blocked creativity--my sidewalk looked beautiful to me.

The weekly trips to the therapist lasted nine months. Eventually I saw that screaming "why" on a hilltop made no more sense than a three-year-old throwing a tantrum. Then one night as I was soaking in the tub I looked up on the bathroom wall and admired a large sampler my daughter had embroidered. I had it framed years ago and thought it quite an accomplishment for a fourteen year old. Often I had read it. It was the old Serenity Prayer. *"God, grant me the serenity to accept The things I cannot change The courage to change the things I can .... And the wisdom to know the difference."* I mused a moment... "I wonder what the wisdom to



know the difference really means?" Suddenly, it came, it meant the ability to know and accept my own limitations.

As badly as I had wanted it, I could not make a life choice for him. In respect for his dignity, I finally allowed that he alone had made that choice, and that the choice was a human one. If humans are not perfect, then neither are their choices ... and who am I to judge? Rest in peace. All is forgiven ... finally.

--Janice Harris Lord from her book, "*No Time For Good-byes*"

## Seasoned Greivers...

### The Evolution of Grieving

July 30th marked the ninth anniversary of my son David's death. Since that day, I have been mourning his loss. I am not being morbid or hyperbolic; just descriptive, stating a fact. I suffer Perpetual Sorrow Syndrome, the unquenchable yearning for a lost loved one which has become a chronic condition hardwired into the mental infra-structure. Yet as time passes, our relationship— the bond between David and me has changed. I have learned to practice managed mourning. I see my progress as the evolution of grieving.

In many ways, the loss of my child is more concrete today than it was earlier in the cycle of mourning where returning to some approximation of normalcy was overwhelming. For a long while, the finality of him being gone forever could not be comprehended. I imagined him entering into the house, saw him on the street, and heard his voice. These apprehensions seemed so tangible. Often, I had dreams in which I was able to intervene and reverse the outcome of his fate. Real life was the nightmare I woke up to.

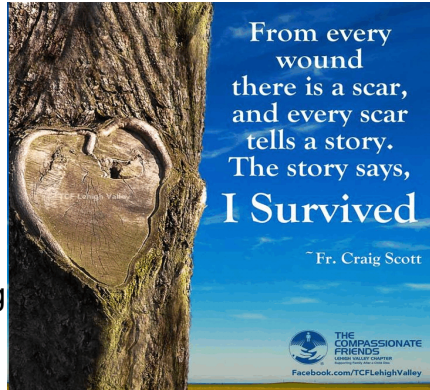
During this period, I was negotiating a foreign territory where the physical environment was recognizable, but not familiar. I felt constantly disoriented and frightened, a sense of dread looming everywhere. There was the avatar of myself going about the business of eating, sleeping, working, while an identical human representation followed behind; a lost soul, stranger to herself and her surroundings, clueless and confused about where she was and what she was doing. I wasn't

psychotic, just in the acute phase of grieving. Simmering below the predictable sadness and loneliness was guilt, rage, self-pity, resentment, depression, and many other negative, self-defeating turns the human psyche takes after deep trauma and tragedy.

There are many factors including time, serious introspection, religious rituals, searching and discovering ways to honor the memory of the child, and reaching out to other bereaved parents to help a parent function after a child's death. Many occasions remain painful and fraught with anxiety and melancholy— the empty chair at family celebrations, noting the milestones of your child's contemporaries, responding to queries from new acquaintances about your children, growing old without the company and support of a son or daughter. Still, the months and then years move forward, and it sinks in that you are still in the land of the living (yes, it is possible!), but your beloved child, ever present in

your consciousness, exists in some other sphere of being. Miraculously, it seems, but not until you are emotionally ready, comes acceptance. The next phase in the evolution of grieving has arrived.

As I approach completing a decade since that sweltering summer day (was I in hell?) when we buried my son, I want to explore the possibility of moving beyond acceptance to a higher spiritual goal: to cultivate an attitude of gratitude. Just writing this fills me with astonishment since I still believe there can never be anything positive about the untimely passing of a young person. But I am willing to open my heart to truths I previously denigrated and dismissed as wishful and naive. I want to embrace the blessing of the time spent with my son rather than bemoan the curse of his death. I want to take comfort in the knowledge that each of us has a purpose on the earth, a mission to fulfill in the eternal unfolding of existence. The worth of life cannot be measured in the number of years an individual lives. Of course, we bereaved parents would have wished our children a long, happy, healthy stay on this planet, lasting much beyond our own departure. Of course, we will grieve for them until we too have shed our physical container, and are no longer matter but pure energy, ready to join our children as part of the creative force that fuels the eternal cosmos.



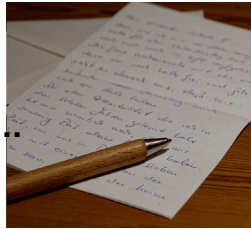


The years of David's life were diminished, but not its worth. I want to be able to let go of the what ifs and if, onlys that surround his death; to give up the fantasies of what he could have been, done, achieved had he been granted a normal life span. I want to focus on the special joy, insight, and pleasure he brought to those who knew and loved him. The thoughts of him and what he means to me have allowed me to manage my mourning and go on with my life. I have learned from his destiny, the immeasurable value of life that must be revered and respected unconditionally, and the indestructible power of love that transcends even death. It was his gift to me, which I accept with gratitude, even as I continue to mourn his loss. This, I believe, is the next stage in the evolution of grief.

--Nora Yood TCF Manhattan NY

## For Friends and Family...

### A Message For My Husband ... From A Grieving Mother



My world has turned upside down since the death of my child. I am writing this to you because I know that my grief is difficult for you to understand. All bereaved couples probably have challenges in this regard, but our situation is complicated by the fact that— my child was not your biological child: You have asked how you can help me. This is what I need:

**Acceptance:** The enormity of my pain is incomprehensible to you, even though you have experienced the death of other family members - to whom you were close. In addition, you were not part of my child's early life, so our relationship to him is very different. You can't know what it feels like to lose a child. I need you to accept that fact and listen to me when I want to tell you what it is like for me. I don't need advice or solutions - just a willingness to hear my feelings. I know that men and women grieve differently and although talking may not be helpful for you, it does help me understand my loss.

**Patience:** No matter how much you love me, you cannot cure my grief. I have to do this in my own way and in my own time. I need your patience because although I want this pain to go away quickly, I know it will not. I don't have control over when it hits me or how long it lasts. I need you to know that I am not intentionally wallowing in my grief. I am just trying to get through it the best way I

can.

**Flexibility:** I understand your fears that since I am not "myself" right now, I am not the person you married, and you want the old "me" back. I am less efficient and less able to concentrate and remember than before the death occurred. The small things that used to be important to me just don't seem to matter anymore. I have been reassured that I will regain my ability to think and remember. Yet, things will never be the same as they were before my child died. I will never be able to view the world in the same way. You and your love are still incredibly important to me. I need you to be flexible as we gradually create a new normal for our family.

**Support:** Though I try to be strong, I have given myself permission to seek help and understanding from others who have experienced a similar loss. It is important that you support my efforts to attend counseling sessions or parent support group meetings, for I need these other people in my life right now. This does not mean that I love or need you less.

**Openness and Understanding:** I know that sexual intimacy is an important part of our relationship, but right now my heart and my soul are consumed with grief and my body simply cannot respond. I need your understanding as we work on openly communicating our needs to each other. Please know that I truly appreciate your offers to help. Know, too, that I have faith that there will again be a time when our family will experience happiness and joy.

--Catherine Johnson, M.A. Enumclaw, WA,

## Welcome...

### Peeling the Onion



The best definition of grief I know is: "Grief is like peeling an onion; it comes off one layer at a time, and you cry a lot." I like the onion analogy because it allows for the individual differences in grief. If one hundred people were given an onion, no two onions would be alike, and no two people would peel the onions the same way. We do it in our own way.

--Doug Manning, The Gift of Significance South Suburban Chapter Evergreen Park, IL

**Editor's Note:** Everyone deals with their grief differently. By talking with each other we can start peeling away the layers of pain. Join us as we share what helps when we are dealing with the loss

of our children. Talking to other bereaved parents gives us insight into our own grief and allows us to see that there is hope for the future.



## Helpful Hint...

Such a beautiful day... why am I crying? This is a question that comes up every spring, particularly from the more-newly bereaved .... Perhaps it is because we see this beauty unfolding, and our children are not here to share it .... The fact that the world seems to go on, just as if nothing had happened (when our world seems to have stopped) seems impossible to comprehend ....

What we tend to forget is that although the seasons change, where we are in our grief is what controls our feelings. Just hold on to the fact that spring is the rebirth of what seems dead-as dead as you feel, now. It is true, you will never stop missing your son or daughter; however, hold on to the hope and belief that your spring will come again, too. When it does, it will be different. Just as the trees and flowers aren't the same this year, as last, you won't be either. But their beauty is still there, and as you start to come back to life, you will find joys in life— again....

Excerpted from "*Such A Beautiful Day... Why Am I Crying?*" Mary Ehmann, TCF Valley Forge, PA

## Book In Review ...



*How Can I Help?* By June Kolf. The author offers step-by-step directives for helping those who grieve. She suggests appropriate actions and explains how to listen to and help a bereaved person (paperback). Available in our library or you can order a copy to share with family & friends. Order from Centering Corp. (402) 553-1200 (For free shipping, tell them you are a member of TCF)

*After the death of a child,  
it becomes crystal clear.*

*We humans are capable of  
enduring much more than  
we can ever imagine.*

*Knowing that doesn't make grief  
one bit easier.*

*The painful truth is that we simply do  
what we must do.*

*We do the unthinkable—  
day after day.*

--Carol Clum

*We should certainly count our blessings, but we  
should also make our blessings count.*

-- Neal A. Maxwell

## Hope

It is the gift of HOPE which reigns supreme in the attributes of The Compassionate Friends.

HOPE that all is not lost,

HOPE that life can still be worth living and meaningful,

HOPE that the pain of loss will become less acute, and above all else, the HOPE that we do not walk alone, and that we are understood.

The gift of HOPE is the greatest gift that we can give to those who mourn.

--Rev. Simon Stephens, TCF founder

## Beautiful Butterfly

Beautiful butterfly, stay awhile  
Your social visits make me smile  
I know your name,  
And why you came  
To get me through each daily trial.  
Black on brilliant orange hue  
I cannot get enough of you  
Can you stay throughout the day  
Or will you leave as you always do?  
Beautiful butterfly, please don't go  
I need you more than you could know  
I know it's you  
From the things you do  
You come and give me quite a show  
From the moment you came to be  
There are blessings for us to see  
I fear the day  
You go away  
No longer will you visit me  
Beautiful butterfly, I'll let you go  
But in my heart of hearts I'll know  
You're always there  
You'll always care  
I'll feel the love you've come to show  
I miss you each and every day  
And in your own very special way  
You come to me  
And let me see  
That we will meet again one day  
--Donna Gerrior TCF Pasco County, FL  
In Memory of Rob



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joel Draper  
Born: 1/94 Died: 5/2004  
Mother: Tracy Solis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew "Matty" Louis Matich  
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18  
Parents: Mike & Shirley  
Matich  
Grandmother: Susan Matich

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

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

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: Desiree Palmer



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kevin Zelik  
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10  
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

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

\* 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](http://www.tcfsbla.org)

\* Please remember we are always working a month in advance and need your tributes by the first of the month preceding the actual birthday.

### A Birthday Tribute to: Edward W. Myricks II April 1972 - Oct. 2011



Dear Eddie,

We can't believe it will be nine years this Oct. We miss celebrating your birthday with you. We miss your smile, your sense of humor and how considerate, compassionate and helpful you were towards others. I knew you were special the day you were born. We're so proud of the man you became. Missing you with so much love,

Mom & Dad



## For Siblings...

### Coping With The Loss Of Older Siblings

Everyone grieves differently. A sibling's response is determined by his or her relationship to the child who died and place in the family.

The most difficult thing for them is that the foundation of the family is shaken. Everything has changed overnight and that leaves them feeling insecure.

The death of a sibling is a mid-life crisis for kids. Suddenly they are aware of their own mortality. That may cause them to become over-protective. They may also over-react to illnesses.

They will rarely talk about their feelings because they're afraid it will hurt their parents more. The reality here is that parents are at the bottom of the list of people they will talk to, but that doesn't mean they aren't talking to someone.

School becomes a terrible problem and grades drop because they can't function any better than we do as parents. At some point in the grief process over-achieving can also become a way of dealing with pain.

Conflicts intensify between remaining siblings. Sometimes there is nothing you can do for your kids

but allow them to hurt. At the same time, it is hard for parents to let the grief be the child's problem.

They feel, they have to make up for the child who's gone.

Kids will think, "It should have been me. You wouldn't hurt quite as much if it were me."

There is likely to be some distancing for a while. There is also a fear that if you pull away you'll never be close again, but that usually doesn't happen.

You have to develop memories of things that happened after the child died, and you have to develop new traditions, but that takes years.

The loss surfaces for young people at every milestone in their lives - significant birthdays, graduation, weddings, parenthood, etc. .

The child who is suddenly the only child— has envy of other kids' siblings. They seem to experience more anger and pain than other bereaved siblings do.

It is difficult for kids when the parent's energy is wrapped up in the dead child. Inside they're screaming, "Look at me, I'm still alive." The reality of death is that there is always remorse about things done or left undone.

Siblings can benefit from this painful experience. They may gain a different perspective on life, value it more highly, and adopt new priorities. They learn things that strengthen them and they tend to be more compassionate and sensitive than other young people.

—Karol Wendt TCF Milwaukee, WI

Ask Dr. Paulson Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

**Q.** I am 35 years old and my only brother passed away this past May at age 27. It was a sudden death—he wasn't physically sick—he was found by my mom in his room on the floor. I haven't had any bereavement counseling for the loss of my brother, but I have been reading lots of books. I have lost others close to me — grandparents, friends—but the loss of my brother has just crushed my whole world. I have good days when I can talk about him without breaking down, but on other days I think of him and can't control my tears. The loss of my brother was very devastating to all of us, my parents as well as me. Since I'm the oldest and now the only child, I feel it is my duty to take care of my parents, and if I don't, then I'm a bad daughter.

However, I've been scolded by my best friend that I need to take care of myself as well. How do I continue to do that without feeling selfish and disloyal to my parents or my brother?

**A.** Once tragedy strikes, the family unit begins to function differently. Although you have always been the oldest child, your world has now made a big shift to being an only child. Your tears demonstrate the depth of relationship you shared with your brother, and that relationship doesn't end. As time passes, you'll notice you have more "good days," when you think of the good times and smile at your memories. You can't share the day-to-day experiences with him, but he will always be your brother. You will always be the person who grew up as his older sister—the person you became by knowing him, caring for him, playing with him, and loving him; That doesn't ever stop or end. You are not being disloyal to him for having good days. I believe he would still want you to have as much comfort, joy, and laughter in your life as possible—even though he cannot be the source now.

Part of caring for yourself is allowing yourself to experience the good days as well as those days when you realize how much you miss him. At the same time, it sounds like you have a desire to share time with your parents too. This doesn't mean you need to become responsible for their moods or emotional well-being. Instead, take the opportunity to share yourself, your love, and your family connections with your parents. Establish a new, stronger, more supportive, and loving relationship with the family that has loved you and grown with you through all the ups and downs thus far in your life.



## For Grandparents...

### Grandparents are a Special Gift

Grandparents are a special gift...  
 God gives them to each child.  
 Their love outshines the brightest star...  
 Their love can never be defiled.  
 Oh, but when a child becomes an angel,  
 Grandparents feel the pain and sorrow.  
 Beyond any pain they've known in life,  
 Or will ever come to know tomorrow.  
 For a grandparent holds a special love  
 For the child their child has had.  
 And to lose what they hold dear...  
 Leaves them heartbroken and sad.  
 Their legacy is their grandchildren...

So how can they learn to survive?  
 Will the dreams of their tomorrows  
 Somehow be kept alive?  
 Yes, a grandparent is a survivor...  
 And life has taught them how to be.  
 --Author unknown, TCF Greenville, SC



## From Our Members...

### Strange Words Welcome New Members

I am always amazed at the instant empathy we each feel as new members come to their first meeting. We have the strangest welcome for these parents: "We are so sorry you have to be here."

In other organizations the questions are probing: where did you go to school, where do you work, where do you live? All designed to "size up" the newcomer, put him or her in the proper perspective of a neatly ordered world. For us, this information is meaningless. We know the world isn't neat and orderly; we discovered that when we lost our children. We care about you, the newly bereaved parent, whose life was tossed into a cosmic blender when your child died. We care because we are you. We have been here a while, in this purgatory of pain. We have learned to live our lives in a different way, to place value on understanding and hope, the intangibles of the purest meanings of life. We have learned to value each other, to reach out and talk, to wait patiently during the silences needed to form thoughts. We listen intently as you quietly say your child's name, tell your child's story, speak of your heartbreak.

Yes, this is a different kind of welcome. But it is the most deeply sincere welcome we will ever receive. We are kindred souls, you and I. Each of us lives in the "after death" world of losing our child. Each of us has learned gradually that the hope we have attained has made life better, lessened the pain, moderated the isolation, tears, emotional devastation and pure mayhem that once overtook us. Each of us has learned this slowly, in our own time and in our own way.

Each month new parents who have suffered the most horrific loss that a human can endure are welcomed into our group. We reach out, we listen with our hearts and we remember.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin, Todd's mom, Katy, TX  
 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.

### Looking To Our Members For Your Help:

1. We need to find someone to help Lori co-lead the meetings. Linda will soon be stepping down.
2. We need a webmaster to put the finished newsletter online each month and to keep the website up to date. Joe's last month will be Dec.
3. We need the donation of a used laptop so Lynn can use it for the newsletter.
4. We need everyone's suggestions for the chapter. A flyer will be going out shortly.
5. We need "seasoned greivers" who come back to meetings to help and encourage the newly bereaved. Help TCF be there for the bereaved families who are counting on us. Let us know how you can help... Please call (310) 963-4646.

**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](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: April 1st for May 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](http://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](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA



**Phone Friends ...** Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child with someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.

- Linda Zelik (chapter co-leader).....(310) 370-1645
- 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine:** (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim:** (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel:** (626) 919-7206
- Redlands:** (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire:** (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley:** (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
- South Los Angeles:** (323) 546-9755 last Tue
- Ventura Co. TCF:** (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
- Verdugo Hills:** (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.



**Local Support Groups...**

- Family & Friends of Murder Victims:** Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail [Roseydoll@aol.com](mailto:Roseydoll@aol.com)
- Alive Alone:** For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. [www.Alivealone.org](http://www.Alivealone.org)
- Survivors of Suicide:** Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Terry Jordan, LCSW (301) 859-2241
- Our House/Bereavement House:** Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also **Spanish Support**

**Group,** Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.

**Pathways Hospice:** Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031

**New Hope Grief Support Community:**

Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

**Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place:** Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

**Torrance Memorial Bereavement Services:** (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

**The Lazarus Circle:** Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7;15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

**Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss:** Contact: Megan Heddlesten (800) 821-6819

**Walk with Sally:** Cancer loss bereavement & art therapy for children- Monica Fyfe (310) 378-5843

**Camp Comfort Zone:** Year round Bereavement Camp for Children [www.comfortzonecamp.org](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org) (310) 483-8313. 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](http://thetearsfoundation.org)
- [goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)
- [bereavedparentsusa.org](http://bereavedparentsusa.org)
- [healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)
- [survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)
- [taps.org](http://taps.org) (military death)
- [save.org](http://save.org) (suicide/depression)
- [pomc.com](http://pomc.com) (families of murder victims)
- [grasphelp.org](http://grasphelp.org) (substance abuse deaths)
- [www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub](http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub) (Suicide)
- [Griefwords.com](http://Griefwords.com) (for grandparents)
- [childloss.com](http://childloss.com)
- [griefwatch.dom](http://griefwatch.dom)
- [opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)
- [webhealing.com](http://webhealing.com)
- [alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)
- [angelmoms.com](http://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	Loir Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Ken Konopasek
Kitty Edler	Susan Kass
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	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.

**Online Support (Live Chat)** TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. The following list was valid as of March 3rd.

**Please Note:** Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to: [www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support)

### MONDAY

7:00 - 8:00 AM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Karen & Jeanne

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator Muffy & Mysonsmom

### TUESDAY

5:00 - 6:00 PM PST

**Loss to Substance Related Causes** Moderator: Becca

and Cathy

6:00- 7:00 PM PST

**Bereaved Less than Two Years** Moderator: Debbie

6:00- 7:00 PM PST

**Bereaved More than Two Years** Moderator: Becca & Carol

### WEDNESDAY

7:00 - 8:00 AM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Debbie

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Karen and Carol

### THURSDAY

5:00 - 6:00 PM PST

**No Surviving Children** Moderator: Adaline & Izzy

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Carol & Donna

### FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:00 AM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Karen

5:00- 6:00 PM PST

**Loss to Substance Related Causes** Moderator: Cathy and Muffy

5:00- 6:00 PM PST

**Pregnancy/Infant Loss** Moderator: Nikole

6:00-7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Muffy

### SATURDAY

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Michelle and Carol

### SUNDAY

5:00 - 6:00 PM PST

**Suicide Loss** Moderator: Izzy

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings** Moderator: Carol & Diana

**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. Registration is now open. Go to [www.compassionatefriends.org/event/43rd-tcf-national-conference](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/43rd-tcf-national-conference) for more information and to register.





## 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.

In loving memory of Steven Paul Giuliano, April 1955 to April 1995. Always in our hearts with beautiful memories.

Love, Mother and Family

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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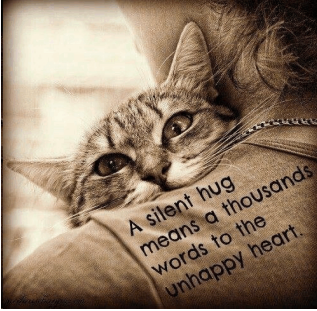
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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

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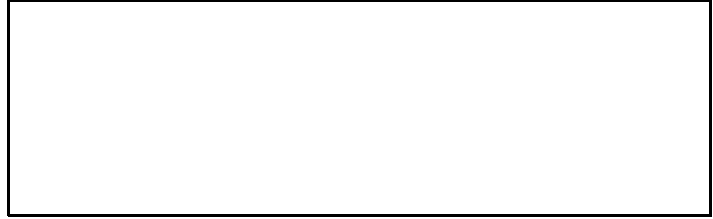
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**April 2020**

–Return Service Requested–



**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.**

**©2020 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER**

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