



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

August 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".

****REGULAR MEETINGS
STILL CANCELLED****
We will let you know when meetings at The Neighborhood Church will resume.

LOCATION:

Online only for the time being. Join us on Zoom for our virtual meetings. For more information call Connie or Leo at (310) 536-9305 or e-mail Connie at ConnieStar58@gmail.com

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 August 6th Virtual meeting is coming using Zoom. See page 15 to request the password for the meetings.

The Mimi's Sharing group is cancelled until further notice.

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

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
**We need a Co-leader
Could that be you?**
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

August 6th topic will start with **“You Can Do This Thing Called Grief.”** The death of a child is the most overwhelming, painful, and unfair thing that can happen to any parent. When you are consumed with grief you may think it is more than you can handle. This month we will start the meeting with general parental mourning, common reactions, and some of the aspects of grief you may not have considered. Join us and share some of the helpful ideas other bereaved parents have found to be beneficial.



You Are Braver

You are braver than you will ever know. You may not realize it but you are valiant, magnificent and strong in spirit. You are courageous. You have endured and somehow survived the most horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer. Your child has died. But somehow you have miraculously found the strength to still breathe in and out. And after a while, you managed to put one foot in front of the other and have tried to the best of your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it.

A world you must step out in to and face every day without any outward signs that you are altered for life. If you were to wear your most grievous wound displayed on the outside of your body like permanent stigmata, would people recoil from the sight or would they perhaps offer compassion and understanding for your piteous condition? That's why you are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly injured you are, you are still doing your best to function and participate in this life.

I want to challenge you to be brave just once more. If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door for that first meeting. We'll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.

--Janet G. Reyes TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX
Editor's Note: While we can not yet meet at The Neighborhood Church, we can offer the understanding and comfort and hope that you need as you walk this road of grief and despair. You can join us virtually on Zoom on your computer or cell phone or talk with us on your home phone if you prefer. Contact Connie (310) 536-9305.

Please join us for the August 6th meeting via Zoom. We understand the need and benefits of being among a group of bereaved parents. While not ideal, until we can resume regular TCF meetings, will be conducting virtual meetings. Like last month, everyone should go online with Zoom 5-10 minutes ahead of the 7 PM meeting time. If you are new to this, the first step is to send Connie or Leo an email or text. You can reach them at ConnieStar58@gmail.com, Liccia79@gmail.com or (310) 536-9305. Give one of them a phone number or email address so they can send you a text message giving you information about the Zoom video conference program and what you need to do to 'join in'. Give it a try. It really is easy to take part.

The Surviving Children

Being a parent is never easy. When one's child dies, it is even more difficult being parents to the children who survive. In those first days and weeks, shock may cause us to make decisions (or allow others to make them) that we will later regret. We may wish later that we had included the children more, that we had not permitted ourselves to be isolated from them, that we had explained things differently. Most of us never expect to face this situation, so we have never thought through in advance what the best course would be.

At some point in our grief, we do become more sensitive to these "forgotten grievers" who have lost a brother or sister. They are having struggles of their own. The first thing to remember is that everything going on with our other children is not caused by the death. They are still, through it all, growing up, going through the various developmental stages that have always concerned parents. Any special problems they had before will not have magically disappeared. Just as we proclaim repeatedly that there is no one way for a parent to grieve, so each child has his own style and timetable for everything, and we cannot control these. We can only try to understand and help when we can. We cannot make it "go away" any more than we can make any of the other harsh realities of life go away.

The very foundations of life has been shaken. The home, so sheltering and safe, has been invaded by forces our surviving children do not understand and parents, who seemed all-powerful and all-wise, may have been reduced to quavering, uncertain robots. Probably for the first time,

death— whatever that is – has claimed someone who is not old. Worse, if there has been the usual quota of sibling rivalry and squabbling, the child may be afraid that he has caused the death by being "bad," or by wishing there were no such bothersome person to have to share with or "take a back seat to."

Just as every child is different, every relationship is different. Feelings toward an older brother or sister who was protector, teacher, idol, and those toward a younger one who may have been a sometime responsibility, hanger-on, biggest fan, are not the same. They may have been best friends or rivals who didn't get along very well. Their responses to the death will be as varied as our own.

A child's place in the family system is changed. The second oldest finds himself suddenly the big brother. The buffer between the others may be gone. Most difficult of all, a child may have become an "only child."

Any child younger than the one who died has to go through the scary years of being the same age. Similar symptoms and situations are so frightening. Brothers and sisters often do look and behave very much alike, and these resemblances can be a source of discomfort or of pride. There may be efforts to exaggerate these, to replace the missing child, to make things the way they used to be.

What can we as parents do to help? Most of all, our children need reassurance and honesty. They need to know they are loved and that the family and the home will continue. They need all the facts they can understand. Part of this honesty requires that they know of your grief. By your actions, you can teach them it is okay to cry (even fathers!), it is okay to admit you are angry at "life" for being this way, that you too are confused about "why." Maintaining a "stiff upper lip" in front of the children only encourages them to suppress their feelings.

Try to be available when they want to talk, but be prepared for the possibility that they may not want to talk with you about their feelings. Many children hold back because they are afraid they might make you cry. You can try explaining that you are not worried about that, but they may still prefer to talk to someone else.

They may be ashamed of some common reactions such as feelings of anger, guilt, jealousy, even relief. Perhaps you can help them find someone they can talk to comfortably. They may have already found such a person without you realizing it.

Be honest in the way you remember the child who has died. It is tempting to reminisce about only the good and wonderful qualities, but was this really a saint? Surely not. Recall, and talk about, the not-so-good and wonderful things too. Be sure you are remembering a real child, for everyone's sake. A saint is hard to live up to. Talking with other parents at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends can give you practical suggestions about things that have worked for other families. You will hear ideas you may not have thought of. Some will have received help from caring professionals and you may decide to consult someone too. When you recognize your family in what others are saying, you may decide that you and your children are really doing pretty well, hurting and healing together and that it just takes longer than you thought it would.

--Ronnie Peterson TCF Star Lake, NY

This Is Not the End of Joy

Grieving is bits of many things - memories, regrets, reminders - each of which bears its own special weight in our burden of sorrow. Each bit has to be gone through patiently, silently, painfully, as one goes through old papers in a long-forgotten trunk, considering each one separately, remembering, assigning it to some new box within our hearts.

Healing, too, is bits of many things - smiles which multiply as the days pass; chilling remembrances turned warm by the returning sun. A day will come when there will be more healing than of grieving, and reasons for joy will begin to pile up in the freshly- swept rooms of our lives.

-- From *Safe Passages* by Molly Fumia

The Fourth Christmas

As I walked into a large store last Saturday to pick up some gardening ornaments and pots, I was hit by the reality that this Christmas will be the fourth one without my child. Yes, it's late summer as I write this, but some retailers are already hyping the Christmas merchandise. A weakness swept over me; I didn't think I'd have to deal with Christmas so soon. But here it was...color coordinated Christmas trees, thematic trees, wreaths, decorations, paper. I felt like screaming and shoving the shopping cart into a display.

I remember the first Christmas after my son



died. He was killed in an accident six days before Christmas. The day after Todd was killed my cousin came to the house and asked what she could do. We had to shop for Todd's children; they couldn't quite decide what they wanted until a week before Christmas. So here we were, 5 days before Christmas, one day after my son died, shopping for my son's children. I don't remember what we purchased. I was still in shock as my cousin continued to push along. Never much of a shopper, I was totally lost on that day; I followed my cousin's green jacket around the stores. We got it done, and my cousin did all the wrapping while I sat and stared blankly at the activity.

This year will be the fourth Christmas without my child...even though he's been gone for 2 years and 8 months, I dread facing another Christmas. His death anniversary is on the 19th of December. Seeing this materialistic Christmas outrage in August set me back. My husband was with me; we bought what we needed and left. We went to the grocery store; when we came out, we found that I had left the keys in the car door. This was not a good sign.

"That's it", I told my husband. "What's it"?, he asked. "I'm not going into another store until January unless I have no choice." He reminded me that I didn't do much shopping anyway, so that shouldn't be too difficult. I laughed because he is right; I avoid retail stores and malls when I can. In my rational mind I know that I overreacted to the Christmas display. In my emotional mind I know that this is my reality. Since my son's death I have avoided Christmas. I hang one wreath on the door. I started putting a candle in the window on the first anniversary of Todd's death, and I light it every night as it now remains in the window all year.

We each find our own methods of coping. We each re-experience the shock, horror and helplessness of our children's death with personal triggers-smells, sights, sounds, seasons. We must train our minds to expect the unexpected from ourselves.

We must learn to accept our reactions. We must understand this is our normalcy. If I stop reacting to certain events and dreading other events, if unexpected tears stop rolling down my cheeks, I might be considered normal by some. But, I know in my heart of hearts that these reactions will stop on the day that I die. The duration and frequency have been reduced. But, no, I'll not stop reacting. My mind tells me that

to "get on" with it is to repress a big part of who I am: Todd's mom. My son lived, loved, laughed, cried, learned and taught. He was my singular pure joy. No, I won't erase him. I won't erase the memories because the memories are as much a part of me as my heart.

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



Guilty As Sin

A father's supposed to shield and protect his children from harm. Because of this I've tortured myself

facing up to the fact that my child is dead and I'm still alive.

Was it punishment for some long past sin? Why didn't I warn him? I should have known. I might have prevented it if I had been there. At least he wouldn't have died alone.

At rare times when I laugh, I'm full of shame for having fun. I can easily see that logically I am not to blame, but I can't convince my psyche and me. In times of reflection I wonder why, if God can forgive me, then why can't I?

--Dr. Richard A. Drew, in *Rachel's Cry-A Journey Through Grief*

God Works in Wondrous Ways-- or Does He?

If you're like me, you've heard so many tired, trite, religiously oriented phrases and quotations, you find yourself nothing short of furious when someone happens to launch another one in your direction.

I am truly sorry, deacons and preachers, along with all you visitors from the Ladies Auxiliary, but I can tell you for an absolute fact that the God I worship is a loving FATHER. He does NOT have some kind of an "Angel Quota" system whereby He has to send down each day and snatch up one of our children just so He can maintain the status quo.

My God understands that I am almost consumed with anger that my child is with HIM and not ME. My God realizes just how shattered my heart is now that MY dreams and future have been totally blotted out. My God does not expect me to stoically resign myself to this turn of events. He understands that it may be months or even years before I can once again be able to effectively kneel and pray.

My God understands of all the injuries that can occur to the human body, a heart broken by the loss

of a child not only takes the longest to heal, but also has the deepest permanent scars. I'll grant you that God does work in wondrous and often mysterious ways. But the death of my child was NOT one of them!

Our children died because of a drunk driver, or an undeveloped heart or lung. They died from a gun shot, a knife blade, or a foolish dare. They were born too premature or they were victims of SIDS. They had a rare genetic disorder or some deadly acquired disease.

But the one thing they were NOT was killed by the God that I know and love.

--Jack Frost, TCF, Bowling Green, KY

One Moment in Time

As bereaved parents, we have a line of demarcation in our lives. This line is like no other. Other people define their lives by that one big career step, move or degree. But in other people's lives, things are different. We are not like other people. We experienced a clearly defined moment in time when everything changed. The Teutonic plates of our lives shifted at one moment on one date of one year.

Nothing will ever be the same. We definitively mark the time before and after our child died. Life was different before our child died. It was easy; it was filled with promises of tomorrow, accomplishments, setbacks, goals set and achieved and happiness that abounds in the natural order of life. But our basic assumptions were shattered and our world turned inside out at that one moment in time when our child died.

Can we ever feel as optimistic about life as we did before that moment in time? Will we ever again believe that one day we will feel balanced, optimistic and serene?

We certainly can, and most parents certainly do. As you read the articles in this month's newsletter about the journey through grief, consider the gentle optimism that presents itself in these parents' words. Each of these parents has walked this lonely road. Each has come through the darkest, rockiest valley into a gauzy sort of light which gradually crystallized into a true sunshine as time moved forward.

How did they do it? Insight is offered in these parents' stories. We must do our grief work, face our demons and stand them down. We must talk with others, set limits on what we will tolerate, and

hold our line. We must seek counseling, attend seminars, attend TCF meetings or other offerings that give us the support of parents who have lost a child or help us in acquiring skills to cope with our pain and loss.

We must take grief breaks in the beginning and for the first year or two. We must take care of ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally.

But most of all we must keep our child with us as we complete our life's journey. How we choose to complete our journey is unique. The common denominator that all of us share is the need to find a precious flicker of hope which we can nurture and coax to a radiant glow. We all find it in different ways and at different times on our grief journey. But, rest assured, we all find it. I found mine in TCF. I call it "my little light."

One day you will feel the burden lifting. You will laugh about things your child said or did. That moment will gently envelop you. There is hope. Let your little light glimmer and then glow.

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

Falling For You....

....while leaves fall, the river drifts by and friends sit, speaking of loved ones lost to suicide. Like the river, conversation drifts. Some smile at memories shared. Others cry tears of regret, anger, guilt, despair; tears for what could have been, but is no more.

Through the years, this group of friends has learned that words fall short of describing sorrow. And so we sit silently, watching the....falling leaves....falling tears....falling for you....until the time comes to fall in line and drift toward a table adorned with recently fired clay shapes. At an earlier gathering, I molded soft gray clay then impressed it with words and symbols of your life.

Although I don't speak of it, I know that yours is not the only life interrupted. My life is also damaged, diminished, in danger of falling apart in oh so many ways. This small group shares space with those we miss and love, both living and dead; in this, my child's birth and death season. How I long to see you float free with the....falling leaves....falling tears....falling for you....

....and I long to connect again with you but my plea falls on deaf ears. I'm left with the task of



creating your wind chime. A year ago, on your birthday, leaves fell as I stamped the soft clay heart with musical notes, falling stars, hovering doves and the words "treasured memories." Now the clay has cured and along the holes in the edge of the stamped heart, I tie other clay shapes with lengths of string – my heartstrings. I add an anchor, a porcelain leaf inscribed with the words "falling in love." The pieces fall in place like....

....falling leaves....falling tears....falling for you.... and then I playfully brush my fingers through your wind chime; fingers that long to run through your hair. The chime whispers your name but its music can never fill my heart like the sound of your voice. Fall – a time for friends to make wind chimes and memories. A time for....falling leaves....falling tears....falling eternally for you.

–Caro Clum TCF Medford Oregon

A Love Not Bound by Time And Space

*Bereaved mother
Anne Cushman discovers that the
value of a life has nothing to do with
how long it lasts.*

While shopping one day, a young clerk, asked Anne, "How's your baby?" This was the first time I'd gotten this question, which I would get countless times again. I couldn't think of anything polite to say. "She's dead."

We stared at each other for a moment. "She died," I said again and burst into tears ... walked away, leaving the cart ... and drove home, crying.

The next time they met, Anne said, "I'm so sorry for walking away like that," I told him. "It was just too much for me."

"I know, ... it happened to my wife too." "My wife didn't get out of bed for a month. She didn't leave the house for three months. I know exactly how you feel. It's the worst thing in the world."

"I'm so sorry," I said. Then, "What was your baby's name?"

His eyes lit up. "Angelo." I could tell how good it felt to say the name, to have his son alive in the space between us, just for a moment

A new baby, one for each of us. A mended heart. Hope for the future. He said, "Hang in there."

Everywhere I went I saw babies. But everywhere I heard stories of death, of loss. On the news, refugee children starved by the

hundreds, the thousands I passed a roadside altar, where some mother's teen-age girl drove her car off the ends of a cliff.

I looked at the eyes of the people I met. What tragedies had they lived through? What stories of loss, of heartbreak, did they carry with them?

How did we human beings get up every morning, put on our shoes and head out the door, when the world was in flames around us? ...

One night when Anne's husband was out of town Anne walked around the house with the jar of her baby's ashes. I am going to turn the baby's room into a beautiful meditation room.

It is all I can do: turn everything that comes into love and awakening I will make her little nursery into a shrine to love, to beauty, to the fragility and beauty of life

Three weeks after Sierra died, I did yoga on our patio again two wren tits were pecking in the bird feeder A hummingbird darted in and out of the bottlebrush

Looking at the beauty around me, I felt as if I were picnicking on the edge of an abyss into which every now and then someone I loved would suddenly tumble

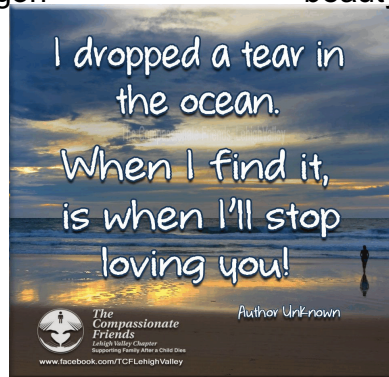
Lying there, I saw that I had two possible responses to Sierra's death. One was to contract in terror, to try and cling more closely to what is precious, wrap my hand tight around it, never let it go. Ultimately futile gesture

The other response would be to cherish what was precious breath by breath, with an open hand ... To cherish each moment, knowing that every day is a gift and a blessing.

Yes, there is tremendous grief in Sierra's loss. I will never stop missing her; I will carry her in my heart for the rest of my life.

But despite all the sorrow, what I have ultimately been left with is a sense of joy of the precious miracle of incarnation (self, essence, heart, core, being, existence). Of the way love is not bound by time and space. Of how the value of a life has nothing to do with how long it lasts. And of how the rippling effect of one life goes on and on, long after a person is gone. Sierra is not with me in her physical form, and I am so sorry. I miss her deeply. But she is definitely still here

She is with me in the way my heart softens when I see someone suffer. I see her in everything delicate and precious: a baby quail



I see that what she has left is a real and lasting legacy

We did convert Sierra's room into a meditation room.

-- Anne Cushman "A Love Not Bound by Time and Space," Lion's Roar magazine (Sept. 2019) pp.77-79.

Newly Bereaved...

Always a Parent

Becoming a parent changes everything about a person's existence. Books and magazine articles, talk shows, gurus, observations of other families offer only faint hints about the reality that awaits. From grand philosophical abstractions to picayune details of daily routines—none of it stays the same. Not the things you read, think, or talk about. Not the time you eat, sleep, wake or brush your teeth. Not what you do with your free time or money, if you can even remember back when those were flexible commodities to be enjoyed on your own and your own terms. A helpless, dependent, miniature human being, not you, has become the center of your universe, the sun around which your commitments, goals, and dreams revolve. And it is your privilege, purpose and joy to be spinning in this galaxy. Parenthood may not be exactly what you thought you were signing up for, yet from the instant you connect with your child, it is impossible to imagine any other way of being.

Losing a child changes everything about a person's concept of parenthood. Unlike the plethora of advice and attention surrounding a child's birth, there is scant media analysis or societal support to soften the trauma of a child's death... When your child dies, the center of your solar system vanishes, hurling you into a directionless, scary void. You morph into an alien, exiled from your base, Planet Parent. Stunned and disoriented as you may be, one truth remains steadfast and indestructible; though your child may no longer be physically present, you still are the parent. The question for me became, how does one be a mother to a child who has died?

As a parent, anxiety, insecurity, competitiveness, excessive worries frequently undermined my confidence. If things did not work out well for my son, I perceived that it was my fault, that I was not a good (enough) mother. Was I too strict, too lenient, too involved too distracted. One of the things that parents — for some like me reluctantly — have to accept is they are powerless

over the future of their children. We give them life, but their life belongs to them. After my son died, I was consumed with guilt that on some level it was my fault because I had not kept him safe. My thinking self acknowledged no person has control over life and death, not even a mother. My emotional side resisted letting go of the magical belief that I could have changed fate.

As a bereaved parent, these negative emotions about my competence have continued to insinuate themselves into my consciousness. I feel unworthy because I am not doing enough to memorialize my son. I compare myself to others who do so much more: creating foundations, raising money, public speaking, marathon volunteering. I can be petty and judgmental, and have to hold back sarcastic comments as I listen to inane complaints by people about their kids. I am tempted to envy those who seem to have charmed lives.

I'm attracted to stirring a pity pot, feeling sorry for myself. Sometimes I just need to embrace my sadness, let it wash over me in tears, or silence, or frenetic activity, until it surfaces again, which it will.

Grieving, no doubt will continue to be part of my psychic landscape. But grieving cannot be all that defines my parental role. A bereaved mother, like any other, needs to let go of myths of control and perfection. We must strive to discover a spiritual path which affirms both the enormity of our loss and our deep gratitude for the years we shared with our child. A mother is gentle and loving toward herself and her children, and being a mother is a forever gig.

-- Nora Yood

Seasoned Grievors...

Mrs. Butterworths



Every supermarket decision has a family memory connected to it. You'd never expect a package of spaghetti or a can of creamed corn to leave you crying in the aisle at the store ... Excerpt from Charlie Walton's book *When There Are No Words*.

Every parent who has lost a child knows these words to be true. Whether it is baby food or a toddler's newly discovered favorite food, junk food for teenagers or an adult child's old time favorite, the grocery store can be a tough trip.

I lost my son, Stephen, when he was eighteen, so it was the junk food - potato chips, Funyuns,

French bread for pizzas, Ragu sauce, pepperoni, Cheetos, cheese bread, cereal of all kinds, Chex mix, and so on that haunted me and made me not want to grocery shop. But - it was the golden face of Mrs. Butterworth that brought me to my knees.

As I stared in horror at her face, I remembered sticky little handprints on the wall when the highchair had been just a little too close, remembered a chubby little toddler sitting next to me at the table, talking seriously, his green eyes wide. "I sink I saw her wink at me," he said of Mrs. Butterworth, sounding a little like Tweety Bird.

"Really?" I asked. Mrs. Butterworth always winked on the commercial - she seemed quite lifelike.

I took Mrs. Butterworth and made her walk toward his plate. She tripped when she was just the right distance from his plate and syrup spilled from her head right onto his pancakes. He looked at me, and I saw it coming in his eyes - laughter. There is something so precious about a toddler's laughter. It seems to start deep within and rolls from their chest until they lose their breath. He cackled, he gasped, his body shook with laughter as Mrs. Butterworth regained her footing and said, "Oh, my - silly me!" He laughed even more.

Therefore, Mrs. Butterworth made a ritual of tripping and spilling syrup onto his pancakes. Sometimes she would let out a shriek as she fell, other times she would say in an embarrassed, dainty voice something about how clumsy she was or how she had tripped over her apron. Whatever she did, he rolled.

When Stephen was 15, the two of us often shared a quick breakfast before rushing out the door. He usually ate pancakes that he cooked for himself, and I joined him for a granola bar and a diet coke. I was lost in thought one morning, a particularly stressful day ahead of me, when out of the corner of my eye, I saw Mrs. Butterworth come walking toward me. She was helped by a hand as big as mine with slender fingers wrapped around her base.

"So - how've you been?" Mrs. Butterworth asked in a voice that tried to sound feminine, but came out a little like a drag queen. She tripped suddenly and screamed in apparent horror. "Oh, crap!" she said as she stood back up. It may be the only time that Mrs. Butterworth has ever said crap - I'm not sure. I laughed until I was sick and left for work with a smile in my heart.

But now, I did not laugh or even smile when I

saw her face. I cried. Other shoppers probably thought I was insane. I walked away. I couldn't look at her. Cheetos and Funyuns and potato chips had already stabbed at me over on aisle four, Captain Crunch had almost tripped me, the Tombstone Pizza's had made me as cold as they were in the freezer just to look at them, but the little golden faced lady broke my heart.

For the next four years, I had a peculiar interest in shortening and oil - you see, they were across the aisle from Mrs. Butterworth, and I had to keep my back to her. She was an old friend, but I couldn't face her. She was an unintentional emotional grenade. It was a sad situation and such a shame for two who had been so close not to acknowledge each other's presence, but I just couldn't look at her. I always knew she was there, kindly smiling, understanding that I couldn't face her. But just last week, I felt the golden stare strongly on my back. I once again feigned interest in the Wesson and Crisco. For the first time in four years, I dared to turn and peek at her. She boasted of ½ the calories - so, she too, understood being mid forties huh?

I dared to turn a little more to fully face the little lady who had meant so much to Stephen and me - the fully golden one, with all the calories. The tears came, but a smile came with them. The memories that the golden face evoked were gentle, worth remembering forever. Older grief is, indeed, kinder.

I put her in my shopping cart and took her home with me. She stands on one of the top shelves in my kitchen pantry, guarding my granola bars and my memories of handprints on a wall, toddler's laughter, a teenager making his stressed mom laugh. And, Stephen - you know, buddy, this morning when I grabbed a granola bar, "I sink I saw her wink at me."

--In Memory of Stephen Beam July 17,1978 - April 13,1997. Submitted by his mom, Marcia Carter, author of Stephen's Moon. Waleska, GA

Friends And Family...

Helping Others Remember



Our friends and family love us and want to spare us from additional pain. But they do not realize that by avoiding the subject of our deceased child, they try to invalidate our continuing love for our child. By joining us in the small everyday conversations and remembering how Michael liked ... or Stacy would

have ... or remember when he did ... they help us realize we are not the only ones who remember. It is up to each parent to set the tone for this to happen. If we naturally bring up our child's name, it lets others know they *can*, too. A Simple, "Thank you for sharing that about Eric it lets me know you think of him/her, too: encourages others to continue mentioning their names.

By creating a low-key way to remember birthdays, it opens the door to others to remember our child and share thoughts. I have baked a cake each birthday since my son died. If family and friends would like to visit and share some cake, they can remember my child's birthday was a happy occasion for us all. If they prefer to keep the conversation light or just be with me, that's fine. Just knowing we all remember is what is important.

By sharing a card (probably from another TCF parent) that simply says I'm thinking of you on your child's anniversary, you help teach others how important it is to remember - and to let others know you remember. As the years pass and fewer thoughts about your child are expressed, it is these simple acts of love that give bereaved parents the added strength to face another year without their child.

At holidays, you can discreetly add a "special remembrance" ornament to the tree. Or donate something to charity in your child's name. By lighting a special candle or including your child's name in grace, you quietly let others know you remember and your child is still an important member of the family, even if he isn't physically at the table.

Some parents set up scholarships in their child's name, or donate to a cause or an organization that was important to their child. Not only does this help another child who was probably close to yours in age, it gives the parents the satisfaction of knowing someone else remembers their child.

Collecting butterflies or angels is another subtle way for you, friends and family to show you they remember your child. Each time someone adds to my collection, it is as if they are saying, 'Yes, I think of him, too'. The tangible act of holding something in your hand that symbolizes the love you have for your child is such a comfort.

Try to remember the more comfortable you are of speaking about your child and sharing your feelings, the more comfortable others will be in doing the same. For many years, death was a taboo subjective, and the bereaved were supposed

to quietly get on with life. By encouraging others to share their memories and love for your child, you help change this attitude. Every small step we take now makes it easier for the thousands of other parents who will be facing this in the future.

-- Lynn Vines, TCF/South Bay, L.A., CA

Welcome ...



You Are Not Alone

When your child has died, suddenly it seems like all meaning has been drained from your life. When you wake in the morning, it's difficult to get out of bed, much less live a "normal" life. All that was right with the world now seems wrong and you're wondering when, or if, you'll ever feel better.

We've been there ourselves and understand some of the pain you are feeling right now. We are truly glad that you have found us, but profoundly saddened by the reason. We know that you are trying to find your way in a bewildering experience for which no one can truly be prepared. We welcome you to join us.

--Space Coast TCF FL



Helpful Hint ...

Do Your Mourning Now

Don't postpone or deny or cover, or run from your pain. Be with that pain. NOW. Everything else can wait. An emotional wound requires the same priority attention as a physical wound. Set time aside for mourning. The sooner you allow yourself to be with your pain, the sooner it will begin to pass. If you resist the mourning, you will be interfering with the body's natural stages of repair. If you postpone the healing process, grief can return months or even years later to haunt you.

--TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

Book Review ...



Butterflies, Angels, & Roses. Messages of hope and healing from a bereaved mother's heart by Francis Wohlenhaus-Mundy. This book is a testament to a grieving mother who chose to pick the flowers on her journey, and share them with us. Fran's symbols of butterflies, angels and roses offers comfort to those who mourn. Available from the

Centering Corp. 1-866-218-0101.

Memories

Today I was walking
 On a street in my town
 I came across a big white house
 With a carefully manicured lawn
 I saw a little boy
 Playing in the sand
 Running his trucks to and fro
 My mind drifted to another land...
 The days when I once had a little boy
 Who loved to play in sand
 Who picked me little flowers
 And placed them in my hand
 Who loved to yell "Mommy"
 When a butterfly landed near
 Who looked to me for answers
 A boy who had no fears
 A child who loved life
 As I had taught him to do
 Who gave of himself
 But left this world too soon
 Tears slid down my face
 As I watched the little boy
 Remembering my own son
 When my life was filled with joy
 I sighed a big sigh
 As the memories ran through my head
 Of another sandbox long ago
 And the many things my son said
 Whenever I see a child
 Around the age of five
 I always get the "memories"
 Of our life before he died
 I touch a dandelion
 When it's white and turned to "fluff"
 Remembering my birthday flowers
 And how the weeds meant so much
 I only have my memories
 After all the years gone by
 I still can't help my heart
 I still sit down and cry
 --By Sharon Bryant Reprinted by permission of
 author Andy Dunbar

Our Children were— still are—and always will be—
 part of who we are and what we do
 Today— Tomorrow— and Forever.
 --Ken Pinch, TCF Winnipeg, Canada

Bittersweet

This town is where our girls were born,
 Their start in life was great.
 Then teens arrived and illness came
 With milestones missed, or late.
 No college graduations,
 No wedding bells were rung,
 No baby showers celebrated,
 Choice baby names unsung.
 Close friends support our double loss,
 Their sympathy such aid
 Yet our hearts ache with mixed emotions,
 To watch their landmarks made
 In retrospect, would we forgo
 Our daughters, so dear and clever
 To skip this pain their deaths have brought
 No way, not ever, never!
 --Barbara Batson, in memory of Sarah and Amy

For My Compassionate Friends

How is it that I know you?
 How'd you get into my life?
 Sometimes when I look at you,
 It cuts me like a knife.
 I do not want to know you,
 I don't want to cross that line.
 Let's both go back into the past,
 When everything was fine.
 You've held me and you've hugged me,
 And dried a tear or two,
 Yet, you're practically a stranger,
 Why do you do the things you do?
 Of course, I know the reason,
 We are in this Club we're in,
 And why we hold on to each other
 Like we are long-lost kin.
 For us to know each other,
 We had to lose a kid,
 I wish I'd never met you,
 But, I'm so thankful that I did.
 --Marilyn Rollins TCF Lake/Porter Counties, IN

Remember that life is precious,
 love is all that really matters,
 and who we are in the end -
 And how we've touched the lives of others -
 is the legacy we leave behind.
 -- Erika Godwin



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 Triliegi & Edward Dornbach

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

Cheiann 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

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

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: 1/84 Died: 5/2004
Mother: Tracy Solis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 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

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: Dorothy 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

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: Desiree Palmer



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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: Alexander &
Sanderson
Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

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

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

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

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

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

Jacqueline Marie Taylor
Born: 1/83 Died: 7/11
Mother Jennifer Flynn

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul Slater
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16
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

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

* 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.

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses, click on the following link to donate online.

www.tcfsbla.org

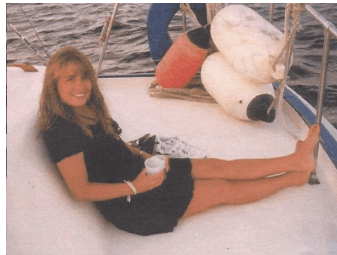
* Please remember we are always working a month in advance and need your tributes by the first of the month preceding the actual birthday.

A Birthday Tribute to: Danielle Ann Mosher Aug. 1978 - June 1997



Everyday - We hear you;
we see you; we miss you.
We Love You Danielle
The Mosher Family

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



My Beautiful Daughter,
You would have been
celebrating your 50th today!

I can just imagine how wonderful it would have been. So many of your friends I still keep in touch with and they miss your smile, kindness, beautiful light inside of you. You were on your way to a wonderful life with two little boys, loving husband and a bachelors degree from Cal Poly SLO, on to much much more.

So many times I wish you were here to talk to, travel with, commiserate with and love your wonderful boys. Jake is 19 and in the Air Force. Joey is 17 and making skateboard videos, selling clothing and loving life. We are still very close as I am to your husband. We all miss you. Your brother is phenomenal, he has been so good to me. I wouldn't have made it without him.

Love & Miss you to the moon and back—
Mom

For Siblings...



Q. My six-year-old wants to celebrate my three-year-old's birthday in a couple of weeks although she passed just six months ago. How can I do this without it getting out of hand or giving him false hope that she might be there with us?

A. I think it's a testament to you that your six-year-old feels comfortable enough to ask if he can celebrate his sister's fourth birthday. It sounds like you have created a supportive environment, where he can talk openly about his sister. The party can be an opportunity to celebrate the life that they had together as siblings, by looking at family photos and discussing positive and funny memories, while at the same time educating him in an age-appropriate way about the permanence of the -death, Children lack abstract thinking skills that allow them to appreciate death as final. It is not uncommon to have a child ask repeatedly when their sibling is coming home. Answering these questions openly and honestly will help children to eventually grasp the permanence. I certainly understand your concerns and would suggest that you also use this as an opportunity to reassure your son that he still lives in a safe and predictable world. Each year on my brother's birthday I look back on family photos, say a toast to him and give thanks to the 17 years he was in my life. Although our siblings are gone, they live forever in our hearts and in our memories.

-Dr. Heidi Horsley, PsyD



For Grandparents...

My Daughter

"Never were you more precious to me, nor have I ever loved you more that I do now." These were the words I spoke to my daughter upon seeing her for the first time following the loss of her five-month-old daughter, my granddaughter. My love for her was so intensified that it actually hurt. Filled with my love for her, but at the same time helpless, angry and torn to pieces, I knew that no amount of ointment, bandages, etc., would ever be able to heal this wound.

Anger, a terrible anger that this was allowed to happen. A daughter, a beautiful kind person who wanted a baby so very much and couldn't understand why it was being denied her. After five long years of trying and praying, it happens, and a little girl is born. Now she has something of her own, something that is part of her. Something to cherish and to lavish all the motherly love that she has in her to give.

Five years of trying, five months of having, then nothing but emptiness. An empty heart, and empty arms. A child is hurt and Mother is there to bandage the wound and wipe away the tears. Now this grown-up child stands before you wounded, and you

are helpless, knowing there isn't a bandage big enough to wrap a torn and bleeding heart in. You wipe away the tears, but they keep coming and mingle with your own. Her hurt is your hurt, and you know that there will always be tears in her life. You know because you have also lost a child.

You hold her in your arms, but the Mother in you wants to take her back into your body so she will be safe and protected. You don't want her grown up. You want your little girl back so you can hold her, rock her, and keep her warm and happy. You are helpless, you can't go back.

Two little girls, a daughter, and granddaughter. A little granddaughter that we only had for five short months to enjoy. Too young to be taken from her Mother. A daughter too young, to have to carry such a terrible sorrow the rest of her life. A daughter that a part of me now has back as a little girl again, but only in my heart. I can't protect her from the sorrows in this life, but I can put my arms around her, kiss her and say, "Mother loves you. You are special."

—Vera Babb, TCF, St. Louis, MO

Vera has lost both a son and a granddaughter

From Our Members...



We Remember Them, Too

A nurse's open letter to families who have lost a child

This letter, in various forms, has lived on my desktop for over five years. Every time I smile while thinking of a patient, share memories with my colleagues, or see a grieving family, I am reminded that you need to know this. Thoughts of your loved one have motivated this letter.

For some of you, we knew you, as if we were your extended family. Together we celebrated holidays and watched your child grow up, even if it was in the hospital. I would like you to know that even if they didn't go to school, form networks of playmates, or have friends over at your home, your loved ones live on in us, too. You are never alone as you miss these children, as you laugh recalling moments with them. Don't worry that the memory of them is fading—their presence is strong and lives even beyond you and your love for them. We remember them, too.

Thank you for sharing them with us. I'm smiling as tears well up in my eyes just typing this to you. Thank you. I hope you take comfort knowing that we too remember them. We remember all of you...you are all a part of us. You might be

surprised to know how often you come to our minds and at what special occasions you are remembered.

We celebrated the wedding of our charge nurse last month. While celebrating the best day of her life, a group of us sat together and told stories about your daughter. I had never heard the story shared by a couple of her favorite night nurses. It was as if it had just happened—I imagined her expressions and enthusiasm, especially when she was talking about barbecues. We reflected on how funny and charismatic and wise your daughter was. As the life of a married couple started, memories of your child were vivid and uproarious to those of us who also grew to know and love her.

The NP that cared for your family and I often run together. We have spent countless brisk winter mornings talking about your grandson. The sun shines bright in our eyes as we admiringly recall his love for the outdoors and the igloo he built with his grandfather. His desire to live a full life despite his tumor inspires our steps. We will always remember how proud you are of him.

While grocery shopping, I saw a bag of sour cream and onion chips. I could never forget how much your little sister loved those chips! She would come in to her clinic appointment with a bag as big as she was, shoulder deep in the foil wrapping as she grasped another chip. It is small and simple, but those chips will always remind me of her; you are never alone as you recall her life.

Sadly, we attended the funeral of another patient this winter. We drove two hours home on the expressway, sharing memories of the child who was being mourned. We remembered your child, too. The physician, coordinator, and nurses you knew in the last journey of that story all shared memories of your child during our ride home. We remember how strong and brave these children were.

We will never forget how much you love them. It's not just milestones, anniversaries, or ceremonies designed to help us remember your children that prompt this. We remember them because they became a part of us. We tell stories about events that we weren't even present for because they have been told so many times by colleagues. We talk about them because there is joy in our hearts when we recall them.

The spirit they possessed and courage we witnessed—we will never forget those things. We will also always remember that they were kids—kids who liked to play, challenge us, interpret the world, and outwit their care givers. You all became a part of us. You taught us unconditional love, resilience, and coping. We watched tears

illuminated by the lights of pumps and monitors stream down your cheeks in the darkness of HEPA-filtered hospital rooms, only to be replaced by stoic smiles and looks of fierce determination as the sun rose. The lessons you taught made impressions far beyond anything our textbooks could have described. Please don't ever think that we "do this all the time" or that it is "just part of our job." Please don't fear that you are the only ones who still remember and miss your children. Their memory lives within each of us as well. Thank you for sharing your child and family with us. We promise to take gentle care of the memories as we stand beside new families walking in similar shoes.

--Jessica L. Spruit, DNP, RN, CPNP- AC, CPHON, BMT-CN Children's Hospital of Michigan

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.

☺ We will be holding our next Zoom meeting on Thursday, Aug. 6th @ 7:00 p.m. We will be having virtual meetings until we can meet in person. I sent out emails to our members with invitation information. If you didn't get it, please message me and I will add you to the list. You can click on the link in the e-mail to join the meeting. Or contact the Zoom hosts, Leo & Connie for the password at (310) 536-9305 or ConnieStar58@gmail.com, or Leo at Liccia79@gmail.com. We hope to see you.

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: Aug 1st for Sept. 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, call Ken at (310) 544-6690. You can mail him a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) 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 (former 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
- Joey Vines (sibling).....(424)488-9695
- Nancy Garcia (Spanish speaking).....(310) 406-5163

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

Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER CO-LEADER: Lori Galloway
CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
SPANISH TRANSLATOR: Albert Garcia
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		

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



MONDAY

7:00 - 8:00 AM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

Moderator: Karen & Jeanne

6:00 - 7:00 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings Moderator Muffy & My sons mom

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.



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 Jonathan (Jamie) Schubert, July 65 - December 06. To "Jamie", our warrior in the fight for justice for the most needy. I miss you every day.
With love, Mom

In loving memory of Scott Nussbaum, May 1963 - November 2015. Remembering your lust for life and endless love for your daughter, family and friends.
Love, Mom

In loving memory of Michael B. Ruggera, Jr. April 1951 - April 1996.
Love, Dad

In loving memory of our granddaughter, Danielle Mosher, Aug. 78 - June 97, who I miss everyday.
Love, Grandma Nelson

In loving memory of Danielle Ann Mosher Aug. 1978 - June 1997 and Patrik Slezinger, Jan. 1989 - Aug. 2017. We miss you.
The Mosher Family

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 _____

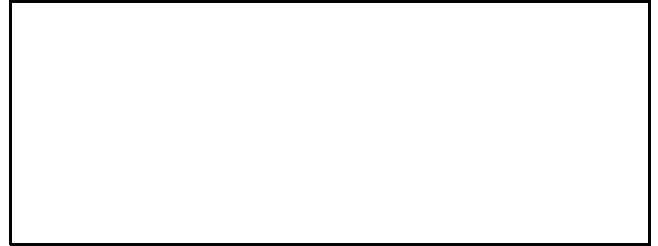
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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AUGUST 2020

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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.