



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

September 2020 ISSUE

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"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](mailto: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 Sept. 3rd 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.

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**The Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> Zoom meeting** will start with "Anger Inside Our Grief". For many of us, until we experience it ourselves, are not aware of the magnitude that anger can have in our grief process. In some cases, it is easy to see who or what we feel justified in being angry at; a misdiagnosis, the driver of the other car, a disease we could not heal, the fool with a gun, even God, who let this happen. Because anger is socially unaccepted, we may try to deny it exists within us. Because we are so consumed with our pain, we may not even be aware that we are experiencing some amount of anger. All we know is how badly we are hurting, and that we want the pain to stop!

Because anger often comes disguised, we may not even realize that anger is a common part of the grief process. We may be afraid of admitting we are even angry with our child who died for leaving us and making us go through this horrendous pain. Anger can also show up in spurts when we are not quite ready for the unexpected reactions we have to every day occurrences. One way anger catches us by surprise is by the simple comments people may make. We will be discussing some of the stupid things people say to bereaved parents, and the comebacks we restrain ourselves from making. We will offer ways to acknowledge, express, and overcome, some of the anger those insensitive comments make us feel. We will also focus on ways to release and process our feelings and how letting go of the anger and starting to forgive ourselves and others, helps in our pain. And in hindsight, recognize how much better we can feel when we share these experiences with each other. We welcome you to share your thoughts and ideas, but as always, just listening is often helpful.

## Don't They Know?

### "It's a good way to die."

Don't they know there is no good way for a child to die? Can't they understand that there's nothing good about his being snatched away from our life?



**"Remember, everything is God's will."** Don't they know I can't understand how God could cause me such despair? Don't they understand that I can't accept this as God's will?

**"All things work together for good for those who love God."** Don't they know I'm not sure I can love a God who robbed me of my child? Can't they

understand I'm very angry at God, who treated me so unfairly?

**"Your child is better off. He's gone to Heaven, where he will have eternal peace."** Don't they know I can't be relieved to know he's in heaven when I ache so to have him back? Can't they understand that his death is an injustice, not a Godsend?

**"Count your blessings."** Don't they know that in this state of mind I can't in my wildest dreams consider all this pain, this anger, this emptiness, this frustration, a blessing?

**"If you look around you, you'll find someone worse off than you are."** Don't they know right now I can't imagine anyone worse off than I am?

**"Think of all your precious memories."** Don't they know how hard it is to do that when I really want to cry, to wail, and to scream at the injustice that has been dealt to me?

**"You MUST put it all behind you and get on with your life."** Don't they know we don't hurt by choice when our children die? I haven't met a bereaved parent yet who wasn't really weary of hurting.

**"Time will heal."** Don't they know how time is dragging for me now, that every minute seems like an hour and every hour like a day? Can't they understand how frightening it is to face the rest of my life without my child?

**"If there's anything I can do, let me know."** Don't they know they shouldn't wait for me to let them know? Can't they understand that my mind is so numb I can't even think of what needs to be done?

Don't they know? Of course these wonderful, concerned, well-meaning friends don't know. They can only *guess* how I feel. They haven't personally known (thank God) the disbelief, the shock, the anger, and the depression that has filled my heart and soul since my child died. They don't know that the words I need to hear are: "I know you must be hurting terribly. You had such a good life together, the pain must be awful. You need to express your anger, your frustration. I know it must be hard for you to believe that God is a loving God who will support you through this horrible tragedy."

They can't know words aren't necessary, that just being there, holding my hand, crying with me, or listening to me would be much more comforting than the words they feel they must say.

—Anita Gordon TCF of Colorado Springs, CO

**Forgiveness ...**

When our child dies, most of us are angry at those who caused or had a part in the death. Sometime, we are angry at our child for leaving us this way. We did not deserve the hurt and now it's lodged deep in our memory.

As we attend Compassionate Friends meetings, we can see we are not alone in this hurting. It gives us the chance to share and try to understand the pain.

Sometimes some of us even hate, although we don't want to admit that hate. I think if we admit the hate, talk about it, bring it up in group meetings, then we can resolve it and slowly turn these feelings into forgiveness.

I feel that we must separate the thing we are angry about from the persons. In my case, I was angry at the doctors in the emergence room who I felt let my daughter die. Then I began to see that doctors do not JUST LET a sixteen-year-old die. Then I knew they were just the scapegoats.

A lot of us are angry at God for taking our child, but then what kind of God would take such a beautiful person. Not the God I know. He would never hurt us or our child.

Forgiveness is hard, but we must persist. We must not think we are letting the person we are angry with off the hook. Someone even told me forgiveness is a sign of weakness and I should be strong and not forgive. I believe vengeance does not even the score. I just go in a vicious circle.

Let us work on forgiving. We can survive on love, but not on hate. Let us love the child we lost, love his memory. When we turn from anger to love, the forgiveness will begin.

We must forgive us, as some of us are angry at ourselves. Forgiveness for some of us will be hard to reach. Keep working on it, keep loving. We cannot control the future, but we can be a part in the successful outcome.

--Lare Warren TCF, North Georgia Chapter

The following article (5/26/97 Daily Breeze) from Ann Lander's, makes some very good points:

August 2, 2020 Dear Ann:

I am a psychologist who has practiced grief therapy for 25 years. I thought "An Open Letter to Bereaved Parents" was excellent. However, one sentence from your leader troubled me. She

wrote, "You will find out who your true friends are at this time." This is not necessarily so.

People often say stupid things or avoid mourners not out of malice, but discomfort. Friends who disappear or seem indifferent don't necessarily love you less, they simply can't deal with the emotional pain. Many feel extremely guilty. They avoid you because they don't know how to act or what to say.

Sometimes, the grieving person needs to lead the way. A griever once told me, "I had a friend who abandoned me completely. She didn't even give me a phone call. I couldn't believe it. She was one of my closest friends. Finally, I reached out to her and invited her to lunch. She cried throughout the entire meal. 'See,' she said 'This is why I didn't call- I can't stop crying.' I told her, 'So cry, but don't lose me and don't let me lose you.'"

There are great losses deeply felt in times of grief. The loss of friendship because people don't respond the way we think they should only adds to the grief. I plead for forgiveness and understanding in the midst of you pain.

-Therapist in Minneapolis

Dear Therapist:

Thank you for a moving letter. Mary Bailey of Galesburg, IL, sent me a poem she wrote in 1982. It was written following the death of her daughter, Dianne, who was on her way home from college for Thanksgiving break when an automobile accident claimed her life. Here is the poem:  
Please dear friend,  
Don't say to me the old cliches,  
Time heals all wounds,  
God only gives you as much as you can bear,  
Life is for the living ...

Just say the thoughts of your heart.  
I'm sorry, I love you, I'm here, I care.  
Hug me and squeeze my hand.  
I need your warmth and strength.

Please don't drop your eyes when I am near.  
I feel so rejected now by God and man.  
Just look in my eyes, and let me know that you are with me.

It's OK to cry.  
It tells me how much you care.  
Let me cry, too.  
It's so lonely to always cry alone.  
Please keep coming by even after

many weeks have passed.  
When numbness wears off, the pain of grief is unbearable.

Don't ever expect me to be quite the same.  
How can I be when part of my being  
is here no more?  
But please know, dear friend,  
with your love, support and understanding,  
I will live and love again  
And be grateful every day that I have you.

## Anger Is a Natural Part of Grief

Whenever we doubt the legitimacy of our feelings, we begin to suppress ourselves and deny our own experience. In this way we inhibit our ability to recover from a loss, for allowing our feelings, whatever they may be, is essential to healing. Swallowed feelings don't disappear, but may become the basis for unresolved grief, depression, anxiety and chronic physical symptoms.

The reality is that we usually do feel angry when someone we love dies. We feel angry at being abandoned, at the extent of our pain, at being left with our unfulfilled longings and dreams. We are angry that our life is challenged and that the world suddenly feels empty or unsafe!

Most of us have not learned to accept anger. We may think "good" people don't get angry. We do get angry, and still we are good people. This and many other emotions are natural responses to losing someone we love. We are often afraid of our anger. Remember we can have strong emotions and not be bowled over. We need to trust ourselves with our anger.

It's most important to know that our feelings need to be expressed. Being able to say out loud, "I am angry," may be all that it takes to dissipate this intense emotion. Then again, we may need to tell the story many times before the feelings are resolved. We may need some physical way to express anger, like pounding a pillow, chopping wood, or yelling.

Some people only show their grief through being angry. Anger can make us feel powerful in the face of experiences like loss, where we naturally feel powerless. Some of us have never learned to distinguish our emotions. Anger is the one that stands out, and it is used to cover all kinds of feelings. We may prefer to be angry so as not to appear vulnerable.

We can help someone else who is grieving by listening to them. We can say, "Tell me about your anger," instead of running away from such emotions. Listening without offering judgment or advice is a rare gift.

The bottom line is that suppressing feelings delays our healing, while voicing and expressing our anger and other feelings empowers us, strengthens us, and helps us recover from our loss.

--by Judy Tatelbaum, MSW



## Sometimes A Man Needs A Good Cry

I wanted to call my friend last night, but I didn't know what to say. We go way back. Further back than the first time I got dumped by a girl, but that was when I discovered we had an understanding that transcended words. It was my last year in high school, popular and as close to being omnipotent as any mortal for miles around.

Then the unthinkable happened -- I got dumped for some jock at a competing high school. After I did all the things I thought were expected of me, like act as if I didn't care and then drink myself sick, I told my friend about the shock and pain of that novel experience.

Although he laughed in my face, telling him made the event seem less traumatic. We called this particular friend "Bull", a hint to his physique and temperament. However, I know better than most that he was a very sensitive person, although this sensitivity could not be seen with the naked eye.

Although we didn't stay in touch with each other on a regular basis, he always seemed to be there when it counted. He made the trip for my wedding, and a few years later, he turned up for my college graduation. A year later, when my eight year old daughter died, and while I was functioning in a hazy numbness while making arrangements, greeting people and keeping a stiff upper lip, I happened to look up from the mist and there was my friend.

We just looked at each other and shook our heads. No words nor embrace passed between us -- I sensed I would have violated some unwritten code he lived by. But it seemed normal for him to be there and I knew his slow smile was an expression of his wordless condolences. If he could comprehend the pain, that sad shake of his head



seemed to say, he would gladly absorb some of it. But he didn't and couldn't. Anyway, we both knew his being there was enough.

"The Bull" was like a distant star one sees only on those special nights when there's a reason to look skyward. He's always there, it's just a question of finding him. There were times when he would find me. Like the time he impulsively showed up at our home at 4 a.m. with his wife and another couple and insisted on taking us to a West Indian Festival in Montreal. We allowed ourselves to be swept along on a very memorable weekend.

Three years ago, his five year old died suddenly. When he called that night, it was in the same unemotional detached way that was a part of this "code of manhood". Having been there, I knew his pain. I was aware of the hurricane of emotions that was raging behind the calm voice asking me to look up meningitis in a medical dictionary.

The following morning, I went to Brooklyn to be there for him. We exchanged what was becoming our ritualistic head shake. We didn't hug each other as our wives did, nor did we cry on each other as others in the apartment were doing. We didn't talk to each other about the mystery of death and about the unfairness of losing a child so young, or about dashed hopes and bitterness.

Instead, we talked in matter-of-fact terms about emergency rooms and the medical profession. The conversation was void of any emotion and in keeping with the "manly" code.

But I wanted to tell him it was okay to cry. I wanted him to know he had to give himself permission to grieve. I thought he should know unless he abandoned his show of strength and let himself be a distraught father, if even for a moment, that the pain and bitterness will grow and crystallize like a block of marble, blocking out any new emotions or sensations and crushing the juices of any residual feelings he might still retain.

Instead, I let him be "strong" and remained at his elbow just in case he needed to go limp on someone for a while. But "The Bull" stayed strong. I found out later I was his role model. I learned that he admired the way I "handled" myself during my ordeal, and to make any other showing was unthinkable.

I should have called my friend a long time ago and told him about 18 months of denial, of misdirected anger, or almost constant thoughts of self-destruction. I should have told my friend about the individuality of grief, and that bereaved parents

can't synchronize their feelings and that resentment can be a by-product of the silence borne of internalized grief.

I should have told my friend a lot of things. Instead, I opted to honor the "code". I heard that my friend and his wife had separated, that he isn't the same person anymore.

I wanted to call my friend last night, but I didn't know what to say.

—Modele Clark, TCF Lakes Area Chpt, MI



## Grieving During This Isolating Virus

I can say without reservation that the years spent grieving the loss of my daughter, daily missing her presence, created a loneliness harsher than anything I could ever have imagined. Now, throw in an isolating, disruptive virus floating through our cities and towns, large and small.

With 16 years of grieving experience on my "life resume," my attention over the past few weeks has turned to moms and dads who are "new grievers," those trying to navigate fresh grief when everything in the country – even planning a funeral or memorial service – is out of working order. You have many concerns and worries. My prayers, carried deeply in my soul, are for your comfort.

Maybe you have other people physically in your presence, or like me, you are at home alone. I'm kind of tired of hearing people whine about how tough it is to be "stuck at home" with their kids, coming up with clever ideas and innovative activities to get through this terrible time of being at home with the family.

Now, I'm not minimizing the challenges of setting up school at home and feeding hungry people all day long, believe me. I just wish these people on TV and dancing happily across electronic screens doing chores in their kitchens and cooking in the backyard had any idea of how very fortunate they are. Many parents are living in agony and would give anything and every thing to have had more days, months, years with their precious children – even when they were aggravating the heck out of you. It's impossible to communicate these feelings to anyone who has not lost a child, so I'm trusting you with my thoughts.

Right now you are dealing with the sorrow and isolation of today. Don't look past today – today is enough. Take yourself outside for a while. If

possible, take a short walk – it might turn into a longer walk when you realize walking helps to air out your feelings a little. This is a time to put yourself first when possible, as hard as that may be. Sit down with a book even if you can't read more than a few pages. Eat something though you don't feel hungry. (I had some popcorn and a bite of chocolate cake for breakfast, so who am I to be giving advice on nutrition?) Take a quick ride through a drive-through for a cold drink, some small treat to break up the day. Settle down with meditation or prayer though you feel as though you can't focus. Try something for just a short time to calm your soul.

My motto through the years has been "make the bed." "What?" To me that means to accomplish some small task, some little job that puts just a jolt of order and routine to my day. It helped me emotionally and psychologically to pull back the covers on the bed each night rather than toss around in a tangled mess. I would think – I've made it through a day – now I can leave it behind and see what happens tomorrow.

You may feel like you are doing better in isolation. I have those times too. But, as you have already likely learned, time can turn on you in an instant, compounding your grief, isolation and loneliness. Reach out through Compassionate Friends to the other moms and dads who are struggling and who know your walk. Listen to what they are living. And, here's something you may not have thought about – you are helping someone else when you have honest conversation with another grieving parent. When you become able to soothe someone else's pain, you will recognize that your own healing has begun. It's a privilege to share your pain.

--by Carol Thompson About the author: Carol Thompson of Tyler, Texas, is the mother of Sarah Kathryn Thompson who died in a 2005 pedestrian hit-and-run. Carol is a member of the local Compassionate Friends chapter, which serves East Texans, and finds healing in writing about the everyday-life aspects of living with grief after the death of a beloved child



## The Gate To Tomorrow

There is a gate that each of us has unknowingly passed through. This gate opens only one way... once we have passed through this gate we cannot return to the other side. Each of us stepped through the gate at a different time and in a different way. This gate

opens to the world of parents whose children have died; it is their gate to every tomorrow.

There is no other place that compares with life in this world beyond the gate; there is no sorrow like the sorrow inside the gate. The numbing pain and perpetual agony we experience when first stepping through this gate are so overwhelming that we often don't immediately realize that there will be no return. But we will never return to life before the gate.

The new world inside the gate is populated with friends who are strangers and strangers who are friends. Our perspective on life has changed forever. Few of our friends from life before the gate will linger with us now; these people are now the strangers. Our pain is all encompassing; they have lives to live, things to do, plans to make, happiness to capture. We are no longer part of their picture. Rare is the friend who stands by us inside the gate... stands by us until one of us dies and leaves the world inside the gate.

The strangers who are now friends live inside the gate with us. Some have just come through the gate; others have been here a long, long time. But these strangers who are now friends share our experience; they understand our need to talk about our children, each life and each death. They applaud our tiny advances toward acceptance and serenity and peace. Although we can never go back to life before the gate, we now have our compassionate friends... once strangers but now kindred souls who share our lives and our world.

Life will not be the same again, yet life can be good again. Inside the gate we will each find ourselves with the help of our Compassionate Friends. They listen carefully to stories about our child. They know our child's name better than they know our name. And that's how we want it to be... Remember our children. Remember with us.

--Annette Mennon Baldwin

## Some Thoughts From A Father On Marriage & Men Stuff

I lost my son, Nathan on January 24, 2001 and my baby daughter, Rachel, on August 1977. I found Parents of Suicide (POS) a couple months after Nathan left. He was/is the light of my life. The depth of the emptiness and longing that has engulfed my heart is beyond description. No mother could miss her child any more than I, a father, misses his children.

Some of the stories I read here about fathers who are cold, distant and indifferent to their mates or even their lost child, are hard for me to fathom. Men and women do deal with tragedies differently but we as parents do share a common love and a common loss. Each has to be open to the other's agony and heart ache. If a marriage was in trouble before the loss of a child it is very likely to get worse. If two people couldn't share and discuss the daily demands of a life together and what they are each missing, how could anyone possibly think that they would suddenly begin opening their hearts to one another about the depth of the guilt, regrets, the should haves and, could haves that are war within each of us here tonight.

The loss of our children strikes straight to the very core of our being. "I can't think of any loss that would engulf our soul so completely. Not an hour of any day goes by that my two children aren't in my thoughts and pulling at my heart. Their Mom and I have been divorced for a number of years. I know her heart aches every bit as much as mine does. She is their mother, and like a death by suicide has an added level of heart ache beyond other forms of death, so does a mother have a little different feeling of loss when a child dies that she has carried and gave form to from the very cells of her own body. But the father had given of himself too. When he loses his son or daughter a part of himself dies with them.

Death is final. Working harder, making promises to your God won't bring them back from the grave. You are completely powerless, impotent, and you can't quite escape the feelings of guilt. You didn't protect your child; you F .... up! big time. No matter how logical the facts are of what happened you still feel that you could have, should have done something to prevent the loss of your child. You just know you should have seen it coming like a speeding car bearing down on them.

We have to be open to our mate's heartache. Like marriage, grief isn't likely to be 50/50 all the time. Sometimes the wife will be carrying the greater burden and at other times the husband. But you do have to have a willingness to set aside your own grief in order to help your partner with his or hers. It isn't easy ... and that is a gross understatement.

-- Willis Day reprinted from The Survivors Group (Friends and Families of Suicides) newsletter, Norwell, MA. May-June 2005

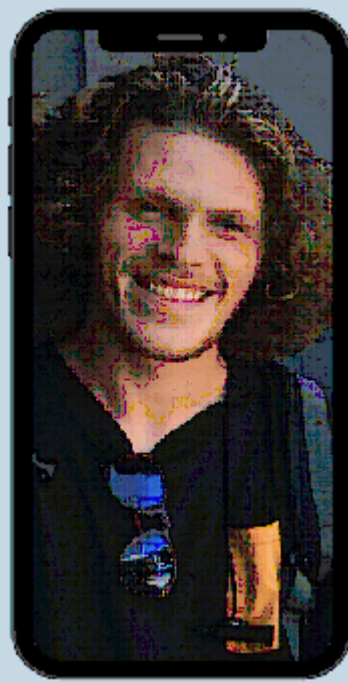
## Tiny Angels

Tiny Angels rest your wings  
sit with me for awhile.  
How I long to hold your hand,  
And see your tender smile.  
Tiny Angel, look at me,  
I want this image clear...  
That I will forget your precious face  
Is my biggest fear.  
Tiny Angel can you tell me,  
Why you have gone away?  
You weren't here for very long...  
Why is it, you couldn't stay?  
Tiny Angel shook his head,"  
These things I do not know...  
But I do know that you love me,  
And that I love you so  
--(Author unknown)

## Newly Bereaved...

### The iPhone in Grief

By Sheila Scott, TCF L.A. Memberlukeloveblog.com Sheila's boy Luke died Oct. 1, 2016. Blind sided and debilitated, and deep within her grief, she journaled, recording the emotional and physical twists of her new life, because through the lens of her grief, everything was different.



Day 1,144. Nov.19, 2019

This Device that I carry as if my life depended on it, brings me instant access to my lost boy. In the earlier months, I would read our text chain over and over. At first to check how we were before he died. Was I terse? Were we enjoying each other? Was I supportive enough? Where were we at? But now this text chain offers me his voice as if I am listening to his voice as I

read, reaching into him, chatting with him, as if the messages had just been sent now. I envisage him as he texted, what he was doing, what he was feeling, thinking of how he was. It's all I have.

The photos of him are in my favorites, marked



by a heart, I visit often. The videos sent to me, I play over and over, they are the closest thing I have to being in his presence. Some I shot but most have been sent to me by kind souls after he died, some with his voice.

New images sent as someone uncovers them from deep within their archives, an old phone, an abandoned Snapchat account .....are like bumping into him unexpectedly in a shop. "Oh! There you are, darling!" Fresh images are like gold. Because I will never have a fresh sighting in life now.

But then comes the dreaded (and now common) fumble and the phone slips through my hands, hits the ground and .... shatters. And yes, many in our grief group have iPhones in various degrees of totally fucked.

So there I sit in the Apple store with some poor unsuspecting "genius" once more...

Yes, the photos are backed up on a cloud, heating up some lake in a secret location.

**"But what about my text chains? I can't lose my text chains!"** I am tetchy, scratchy and anxious.

We all know that feeling when some auto-update unexpectedly, somehow, deletes something you need and nobody seems to know why or where it's gone.

The "genius" does my transfer to the new phone and I scramble through my text chain to find those golden threads from my boy. You can't search his name, it's too long ago, it won't come up. I know this now.

**"You go to write him a text,"** I explain, as I tap in his name frantically....and there it is! My precious text chain intact!

Everyone exhales and a tear runs down my cheek at the absurd situation of my life as I hug the new, unshattered, virgin device to my heart. Smiling, crying.

Yes, I can, I am told, download this text chain and archive it somehow, but it's not the same as flicking it up to devour evidence of Luke, when needed, as I go about my day.

--Sheila Scott TCF LA

## Seasoned Greivers...

### The Stone

The best way I can describe grieving over a child as the years go by is to say it's similar to carrying a stone in your pocket. When you walk, the stone brushes against your skin. You feel it.

You always feel it. But depending on the way you stand or the way your body moves, the smooth edges might barely graze your body.

Sometimes you lean the wrong way or you turn too quickly and a sharp edge pokes you. Your eyes water and you rub your wound but you have to keep going because not everyone knows about your stone or if they do, they don't realize it can still bring this much pain.

There are days you are simply happy now, smiling comes easy and you laugh without thinking. You slap your leg during that laughter and you feel your stone and aren't sure whether you should be laughing still. The stone still hurts. Once in a while you can't take your hand off that stone. You run it over your fingers and roll it in your palm and are so preoccupied by its weight, you forget things like your car keys and home address. You try to leave it alone but you just can't. You want to take a nap but it's been so many years since you've called in "sad" you're not sure anyone would understand anymore or if they ever did.

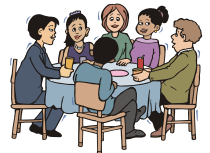
But most days you can take your hand in and out of your pocket, feel your stone and even smile at its unwavering presence. You've accepted this stone as your own, crossing your hands over it, saying "mine" as children do. You rest more peacefully than you once did, you've learned to move forward the best you can. Some days you want to show the world what a beautiful memory you're holding. But most days you twirl it through your fingers, smile and look to the sky. You squeeze your hands together and hope you are living in a way that honors the missing piece you carry, until your arms are full again.

-- Jessica Watson -- (Submitted by Cat Morrow mother of Alex Andru Mendoza)

## Friends And Family...

### Listen

When I ask you to listen to me  
And you start giving me advice,  
You have not done what I asked.  
When I ask you to listen to me  
And you begin to tell me how I should feel  
You are trampling on my feelings.  
When I ask you to listen to me  
And you feel you have to do something to solve my problems,  
You have failed me, strange as that may seem.





Listen! All I ask is that you listen;  
 Not talk, nor do – just hear me.  
 And I can do for myself – I'm not helpless  
 Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.  
 When you do something for me, that I can and need  
 to do for myself,  
 You contribute to my fear and weakness.  
 But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel  
 what I feel,  
 No matter how irrational  
 Then I quit trying to convince you  
 And can get about the business of understanding  
 What's behind this irrational feeling.  
 When that's clear,  
 The answers are obvious and I don't need advice.  
 Irrational feelings make sense when we  
 Understand what's behind them.  
 Perhaps that's why prayer works sometimes for  
 some people;  
 Because God is mute, and doesn't give advice to try  
 to 'fix' things,  
 He/She just listens, and lets you work it out for  
 yourself.  
 So please listen, and just hear me, and if you want  
 to talk,  
 Wait a minute for your turn,  
 And I'll listen to you.  
 Source: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mhcarer/docs/articlelisten/pdf>

(Lifted from October 2009 Newsletter Family Bereavement Support Services Royal Children's Hospital)



## Welcome ...

### With Whom Can We Share Our Feelings?

For many of us, there are few people with whom we can share our innermost feelings; yet these very feelings may be nearly exploding to get out! Perhaps for the first time in your life you are really angry— angry at God?— angry at your dead child?— just angry?!

Are any bereaved parents going about your daily routines, appearing to those around you to be “doing well?” Yet in your “alone moments” you hurt so badly you think you may never feel better again? Or perhaps you're not even resuming a routine, lack motivation, are barely functioning. Many bereaved parents have shared these feelings with each other...

Who would understand if you told them you started sobbing when you passed your dead child's

favorite food in the grocery store? Or that you want to yell at the crowds walking nonchalantly in the shopping center, “Don't you know my child has died?” Another bereaved parent would understand.

To how many of your friends could you tell that you kept some of your child's clothing “handy” and experienced a bittersweet feeling when you smelled these clothes? Another bereaved parent would probably not think this “unusual”.

How fortunate, you are if you can share these and other feelings with your spouse, family members, your minister, or good friends. However, many times, these people from whom you would expect the most support aren't equipped or can't handle your normal feelings of grief.

One of the benefits mentioned most often of Compassionate Friends, whether it's by attending the meetings, using the available listeners by phone or through the newsletter, is hearing that your feelings are not unusual after all. It is most comforting to hear from bereaved parents for whom it has been 3 or 7 years since their child died that they experienced many of these same feelings, worked their way through the grief and can now say, “I don't feel that way anymore. I really laugh and don't feel guilty. I'm leading a productive life again. I may think of my child almost every day, and still miss him/her, but I no longer review details of the accident or illness, or circumstances surrounding their death. I'm no longer angry or feel guilty. Most memories are pleasant memories.”

This is why we “old timers” continue to attend meetings, remain available by the telephone and try to meet peoples' needs through the newsletter.  
 --Carolyn Reineke TCF of Fort Wayne, IN

## Helpful Hint...



## Remember ...

Like many things in life, grief takes practice. Take one moment at a time, one hour, one day ... eventually you will learn how to deal with it.

## Book in Review ...



***Thriving After The Death Of A Child*** by Cathy Cheshire. I want to drastically improve how the world typically thinks about anybody suffering after the death of a cherished child. Instead of a trauma

they will never get over, they can enrich their life with one of the greatest lessons about love after natural grieving. I had a life filled with heartbreak and then my beloved only child died. I relay with painful honesty how I spiraled into a dark relentless depression and then learned how to live again in a powerful way surprising even me. Available from The Centering corp. 1-866-218-0101.

## Beyond The Sunset

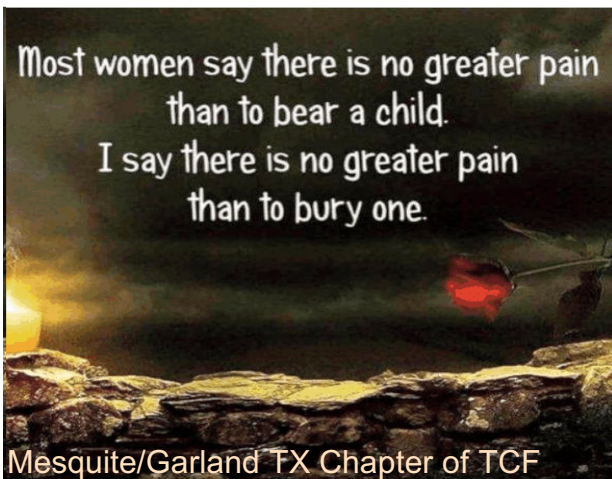
Should you go first and I remain to walk the road alone,  
I'll live in memories garden dear, with happy days we've known.  
In spring I'll wait for roses red, when faded, the lilacs blue.  
In early fall when brown leaves fall, I'll catch a glimpse of you.  
Should you go first and I remain, for battle to be fought.  
Each thing you've touched along the way will be a hallowed spot.  
I'll hear your voice, I'll see your smile, though blindly I may grope,  
The memory of your helping hand will buoy me on with hope.  
Should you go first and I remain, one thing I'll have you do:  
Walk slowly down that long long path, for soon I'll follow you.  
I want to know each step you take, so I may take the same.  
For someday down that lonely road you'll hear me call your name.  
--Author Unknown

## On Losing a Child

Face your feelings  
Don't let them hide inside.  
Confront the pain  
Give it a name,  
Let it roam your heavy heart.  
Each teardrop you shed  
becomes a crystal bead  
to be added to your chain of sorrow.  
Keep the chain.  
Wear the beads with pride -  
A badge of your courage in facing the pain.  
Face whatever may come.  
Accept and be thankful  
for the lessons you have learned.  
Stay open to your feelings.  
Soon the pain will be mixed with other colors.  
You will be weaving a new tapestry.  
Each strand of emotion adds richness.  
Stay in the present moment.  
Look to the past to fathom the future.  
Keep one foot in the present  
and the other in eternity.  
I have children in both worlds.  
I am attentive to each for their lessons.  
We learn from our children.  
They are our blessings.  
By doing for our children  
we are enriched by them.  
It does not end when they leave this earth.  
We understand not with our minds,  
But with our hearts.  
--Mariann Lindquist In memory of her son, Joel

## Awkward Silence

I wish that someone would say his name.  
I know my feelings they're trying to spare,  
And so we go through the charade, the game,  
Of dancing around the ghost that is there,  
Trying to avoid evoking a tear,  
Or stirring emotions too painful to bear.  
That he be forgotten is what I fear,  
That no one will even his presence miss,  
As if there were no trace that he was here.  
By referring to him, my purpose is  
Not to stir pity or keep things the same,  
But my heart will simply break if his  
Memory will die like a flickering flame.  
I just wish someone would say his name.  
-- Richard D., M.D., TCF Knoxville, TN





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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* 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: Scott Curry Aug. 1959 - July 2008



Dear Son,

I was thinking about you this morning, as I often do when your birthday draws near. Your due date came and went with you refusing to be born yet. Finally our doctor felt it was time to encourage you to meet us. So off we went, me dressed in my pink linen maternity suit with the huge, frilly bow for the very last time. Your Dad, me and you set out for Santa Monica, expecting a long wait. But, about two hours after checking into Santa Monica Hospital, I was presented with a 9 lb. baby boy. In those days we had no idea what sex the baby would be until it arrived. The first time I saw you I knew the name we chose would fit. But, what about the bassinette and it's miles of frilly lace, pink bows and organdy skirt created for your sister almost three years before. It didn't seem like your style. At 9 lbs. you might look silly in it, but you didn't care and neither did we. Our boy was finally home and such a good baby, so patient, seeming to know Mom would be along soon to tend to your needs. We spent so many hours together, just you and me, sitting in our rocking chair. Those are the times I recall now, soothing moments, listening to you coo, laughing at your sister and her friends, enjoying a bath, you loved life and all it had to offer then.

I should have known that a bright boy like you would be making plans for the day you'd be active and free. Those days came early, even before you were a year old. Imagine my terror when I felt a need to check on you at 5 a.m., barely dawn, and found the front door wide open. You had figured out how to open the lock, and were running fast on little bare feet. I took chase close behind and found you quickly, thank God. This, was the first of many such escapades, and the last of sleeping past dawn. You were smart, could take anything

apart. While we were trying to find the knobs now missing on our TV, you were busy removing the doors from the cupboard. No one could believe your talents until they babysat for you. An Uncle who wasn't able to keep up, nicknamed you Bull Dozer Bill, and asked that we not bring you back until you graduated from College. We laughed, but it didn't happen that way, there was no college for my darling Scott. He was busy doing so many things, whizzing through the Huckleberry Finn phase and becoming a handsome grown man. Finally finding success in the Cell Phone Tower business, and leaving a world behind, including three children, that will never forget you.

It went so hellishly fast, Scott. Seems I greeted you in one hospital and too soon I had to say good-bye in another. It was a wild ride, but you can bet one thing my dear son, during the whole time including now, you have been loved every minute of the way. I don't think of you as resting in peace. Our Creator knows you even better than I do and that you've always been busy, and He's sure to use your talents in Heaven. How I miss my Bull Dozer Bill and my grown Scott, too.

I Love You, Mom

## For Siblings...



### What Candice Would Say

I'm sorry big sister, I can't play with you.  
I'm sorry grandpa, I can't go to the zoo.  
I'm sorry daddy, you can't kiss me goodnight.  
I'm sorry mommy, you can't hold me tight.  
No one knows why, no one can guess.  
But I can't play right now,  
I've gone to rest.

--Mary Lingle TCF Tyler, TX In Memory of Candice

## Day's in the Valley

An early morning phone call brought news that irreversibly changed my life. My parents called to tell me my younger brother had been killed in a car accident. They wept as I spoke to them. I had never heard my Dad cry before. Numbly, I hung up the phone. I didn't cry. There was not time for tears. Flight plans had to be made, clothes packed. I had to think clearly and act quickly.

The 100-mile trip to the airport seemed especially long and dark as I drove alone that morning. Later, aboard the plane, I looked out the window and tried to comprehend what had



happened. Maybe it wasn't him, I thought. Maybe they got him mixed up with someone else. I dreaded the scene that waited me at home, yet I couldn't get there quickly enough. I longed to comfort Mom and Dad, to be with them.

Arriving in Des Moines, I was met by relatives. At last I could let myself cry. When I reached my parents' home I was relieved to finally grieve with them, but a terrible pain was burrowing deep within as the reality of what happened began to sink in.

Funeral arrangements were made. People gave their condolences. Stacks of cards arrived daily. The pain remained. I sensed God's presence as friends and family gathered. Words meant nothing, but those who came and cried with us were the ones who gave comfort. They didn't quote Bible verses. They didn't try to explain why it happened. They just hugged us and cried.

For almost a year, I replayed again and again those events as if they had been stored on videotape. Every sight, every sound, every pain was as vivid as if it had happened the day before. Time has numbed the pain and faded the "tapes" to some degree, but my life will never be the same. There will always be a hole in our family that cannot be filled.

I see life differently now. I've learned things that have made me more mature. Tragic loss demands finding something meaningful in it or retreating into bitterness. When I said good-bye to my brother, I never dreamed it would be the last time I would see him. Words left unsaid echoed in my mind for many months. Now, taking time to say and do the things I used to put off is more important. Treating each opportunity to be with friends or loved ones as if it might be the last time I will see them give me the incentive to resolve conflicts and say the things that need to be said. Problems and disagreements are never insurmountable.

Experts say the grieving process should end with the acceptance of death. Instead of accepting my brother's death, however, I have only acknowledged it. Death, like an unwanted visitor, doesn't have to be catered to, but it does have to be acknowledged for the healing to begin. I can't say I understand why my brother was killed, but God has given me strength to go on. Though at times it appeared that there was no way out of the valley, time has brought me renewed strength. Time does not heal all wounds, but it does bandage those it cannot heal.

--Rick Bunkofske TCF, Northern Central Iowa

## For Grandparents...



### "In A Split Second"

We've always had fears of family tragedy,  
Seemingly distant, yet always so near  
We prayed our family to pass through this life,  
Without tragedy's heavy burdens to bear  
But then, on that day so brutal,  
So suddenly our lives turned into pain  
Normal life we knew was gone,  
And never again would be the same  
We lost two little Grand Daughters,  
In a split second they were taken forever to be  
This day our life just turned upside down,  
Yes, we lost Loral and Macy you see  
Now our lives, we must continue,  
It hurts, and wasn't supposed to be this way  
Our souls yearn to reach that great destination,  
While weary and worn, we trod forth each day  
We still find some happiness, but more often  
sadness,  
We sometimes laugh and sometimes cry  
With grief and longing for our lost girls,  
Yes, with our faith, we know we'll get by  
--PawPaw-Donald Moyers TCF Galveston County,  
TX, In Memory, of Loral and Macy

## From Our Members...



### Adjusted

"It's been several years since your son died," They say,  
"Surely, you must have adjusted by now."  
Yes, I am adjusted—  
Adjusted to feeling pain  
And sadness and grief and guilt and loss.  
Adjusted to hurting and unexpected tears.  
Adjusted to seeing people made  
uncomfortable upon  
Hearing me say "My son died."  
Adjusted to losing my best friend because  
I'm not always "up."  
Adjusted to people acting as if grief is contagious.  
And TCF meetings are "morbid."  
Adjusted? Oh, yes, to many things.  
Knowing I won't hear his voice, but listening for it  
still.  
Knowing I won't see him drive his Toronado,  
But staring at every one I see.  
Adjusted to feeling empty on his birthday

And wishing for just one more time with him.  
Adjusted: As life goes on—  
To realizing I cannot expect everyone I meet  
To wear a bandage—just because I am still  
bleeding.

--Shirley Blakely Curle, TCF Central AR,  
Submitted by Linda Cortez

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, Sept 3rd @ 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](mailto:ConnieStar58@gmail.com), or Leo at [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com). We hope to see you.

**New Webmaster Needed:** We are looking for someone who can put the finished newsletter online each month and update upcoming events on the website. Please call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 if you can help.

**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: Sept. 1st for Oct. 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](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 (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 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
  - 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](http://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](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   | childloss.com  |
| goodgriefresources.com   | griefwatch.dom |
| bereavedparentsusa.org   | opentohope.com |
| healingafterloss.org   | webhealing.com |
| survivorsof suicide.com  | livealone.org  |
| taps.org (military death)  | angelmoms.com  |
| save.org (suicide/depression)  |                |
| pomc.com (families of murder victims)  |                |
| grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)   |                |
| <a href="http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub">www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub</a> (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-](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-)

[communities/online-support](#)**MONDAY**

7:00 - 8:00 AM PST

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings**

Moderator: Karen &amp; 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 Matthew Hales Clifford, January 1980 - March 2015. A gift from God. The joy of his parent's lives. Like sunshine. Happy and full of energy. Enjoyed life and his many friends. Creative writer, artistic photographer. Loved to travel. Went all the way to Heaven. Recently joined by his uncle and father.

I will love them forever, Melissa (mother)

In loving memory of Chidinma Ezeani, August 1989 - October 2019. Chinma you would have been 31 this year, Happy Birthday. I know you are celebrating with your fellow angels. All you wanted on your birthday was a loving call from you loved ones. Nma we love you. Have fun over there until we join you.

Mom, Dad, Ada & Melie

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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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 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  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510

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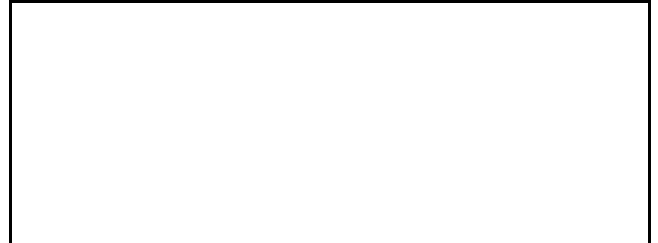
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Yet another  
"New Normal"  
To adjust too?

–Return Service Requested–



**September 2020**

## **Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly**



### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.  
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,  
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,  
just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.  
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.  
We are young, and we are old.

Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh  
and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,  
while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,  
while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,  
it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other  
our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,  
but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love  
to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as  
well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

**WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.**

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