



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

October 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 Oct 1st. 3rd Virtual meeting is coming using Zoom.** See page 15 to request the link for the meetings. It is very easy to join just by clicking on the link in your email. Leo will walk you through it ahead of time if you are worried about technicalities, just email him at [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com)

**The Mimi's Sharing group** has been moved to Hoff's Hut's outdoor dining area. Join us on Friday's at 1 PM in their patio dining area.

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

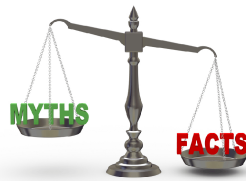
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Chapter Co-Leaders:  
**We need a Co-leader  
Could that be you?**  
Lori Galloway (760) 521-0096  
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**The Oct 1st. Zoom meeting** will start with “**Myths About Grief**”. We will be discussing some of the misunderstandings we deal with in our grief. For the vast majority of us, we have never had to deal with the overwhelming impact that the loss of a child entails. Through our haze of pain and uncertainty we are lost. Suddenly we are bombarded with stories of what to expect, how long the pain will last, the “correct” way to grieve, and platitudes that do anything but help. This meeting we will try to dispel some of the myths surrounding grief. By sharing our own stories of what we went/or are going through, we don’t feel so alone and uncertain about surviving the loss of our precious children. Please join us on Zoom and share what did/didn’t help you.

### **Myths About the Impact of Grief on the Marriages of Bereaved Parents**



**(1) As the same child has died, each parent experiences the same loss.** Each individual mourns the relationship and person that has been lost. As parents, each of us has experienced our child differently and had a unique relationship with that child. Therefore, both bereaved parents are mourning different losses, and these will be what will influence what one misses and when one misses it (e.g., one parent may miss the opportunity to talk with the child after school, while the other especially may miss watching football games on Sunday).

**(2) Spouses will tend to be more similar than dissimilar in their grief.** At latest count, people grieve according to 32 different sets of factors, each of which is highly idiosyncratic, as individualistic as a fingerprint. Spouses are no more alike necessarily in their mourning than are strangers. Loving one another, or living in the same house, does not make individuals respond to loss similarly. Some of the major factors contributing to differences between parents include: type and quality of the relationship with the child; sex-role conditioning; personality and coping behaviors; past experiences with loss; social, cultural, and religious backgrounds; social support received; reliance on drugs and alcohol; and physical health. Spouses will have to give each other wide latitude for their differing experiences of grief.

**(3) Once a couple can learn to manage their grief, they will be back to themselves again.** A major loss always changes the bereaved somewhat.

Parts of us die when someone we love very much dies. Most of us continue on, but we are altered by the impact of the loss and the adaptations to it that have been required of us. We not only will have to learn to relate in a new way to our deceased child (i.e., we still can have a relationship with that child, but it must be a different type now that he or she is dead). We also must learn how to relate to the rest of the world, including our spouse, in new ways to accommodate the changes in us occasioned by the loss. Especially during the long period of acute grief, in which the absence of our child painfully teaches us repeatedly that he or she is gone, it may be very difficult to relate to our spouse because of our pain and distress. Our communication with each other may have deteriorated; our sexual relationship may not be what it once was or it may have disappeared entirely. It is not abnormal for this to continue for a lengthy period of time. Couples who are successful in managing to weather this crisis together: (1) keep the communication open as much as possible; (2) recognize their distress and the changes in themselves, and work to express both in the healthiest possible fashions; (3) insure their expectations of one another are appropriate and give each other permission to grieve individually as necessary; and (4) find ways slowly to integrate all of the changes into the marriage.

**(4) If a parent and couple are "healthy," the mourning will last longer than most people expect—up to a few years.** The duration of mourning varies according to the particular loss, its circumstances, the mourner, and the conditions surrounding the mourner. Nevertheless, it is now known that mourning a beloved person may take years of acute grief and that the long-term mourning process takes much longer, with some aspects of mourning never being entirely finished; i.e., there always may occur subsequent experiences which can trigger in us temporary upsurges in grief for our child (e.g. when his brother gets married and he is not there or when it is Thanksgiving and her place is empty at the table). It constitutes neither pathological nor unresolved grief, nor does it mean that acute mourning still persists. Bereaved parents must recognize that mourning the loss of any major person, especially a child, will mean continuing throughout the rest of life to encounter times when the pain of the loss is brought back and the absence made more acute at that moment, which causes a temporary upsurge in grief. As long as this doesn't interfere too long with your continuing to

move adaptively into the new life without your loved one, such reactions need not be incompatible with healthy adaptation for the rest of your life.

**(5) Parental grief declines over time in a steadily decreasing fashion.** Like all types of grief, parental grief fluctuates much more than society expects. In the case of the bereaved couple, parents initially may be more similar in their grief and then, from two to five years after the death, grow further apart before coming closer together again. It is suggested that this is because a mother's grief often increases for several years after the two-year point following the death, while the father's tends to decrease. Therefore for a period of time they become more discrepant from one another. It is important to realize this so that if it occurs you can be aware of it and act to manage its disruptive effects on you and your spouse.

**(6) Parents who lose children usually end up with a divorce.** Despite the prevalence of the belief, it is positively untrue that parents whose child dies inevitably are headed for a divorce. The death of a child places an enormous strain on a relationship, but it has *not* been proven to destroy it. In fact, Dennis Klass' study of TCF parents suggests that it is precisely because parents who survive their grief (i.e., as a result of the positive growth that can come from loss) no longer wish to remain in unhealthy relationships, and this is one reason for divorces following a child's death. When parents do divorce, more often than not it is due to their having had significant problems before the child died and the death only brought the long-term issues to a head. Although there is no question that the loss of a child and the ensuing grief does stress a marriage, do not think you must end up with a divorce. Some parents actually become closer after their child's death.

**(7) Loss only brings pain and devastation.** Despite the agony of losing their child and the long-term effects of such a loss, many bereaved parents have worked enormously hard to develop some positive gains out of their loss (e.g., beginning support groups, reordering their priorities, developing better family communication, establishing closer relationships, etc.) While they never would have chosen to lose their child to achieve these gains, they are determined to choose healthy responses to it. You can do this as well.

**Summary:** Myths hurt all bereaved parents. The more accurate information you have, the better prepared you will be not only to encounter the

vicissitudes of parental grief, but to minimize the negative effects of such misinformation.

--Therese Rando, Ph.D

## The Myth of Closure

Grievers often ask:

When will I begin to feel better?

When will I return to normal?

When will I achieve some closure?

Closure, our culture tells us, will bring about a tidy ending, a sense of completion. Some grievers hope that the desired magical closure will occur after the funeral or memorial service.

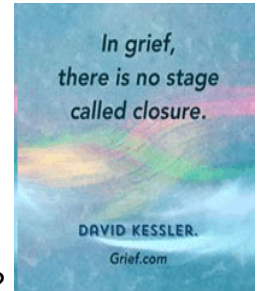
Others are confident it will come once they have cleared out their loved one's room. Or maybe after a special personal ritual.

Or perhaps after the first anniversary comes and goes ... "surely then we will have closure," we think.

The reason we long for closure, of course, is because we would like to neatly seal away all of this pain. We would like to close all of the sad, confused, desperate, angry feelings out of our life. We would like to put all of this behind us. Closure. What an odd concept really, as if we could truly close the door on pain ..., turn the lock and throw away the key. The truth is far more complex, of course. Closure is for business deals. Closure is for real estate transactions. Closure is not for feelings, or for people we love.

Closure simply does not exist emotionally, not in a pure sense. We cannot close the door on the past as if it didn't exist because, after losing someone dear to us, we NEVER forget that person or the love we shared. And in some ways, we never entirely get over the loss. We learn to live with the loss, to integrate it into our new identity. Imagine if we really could end this chapter in our life, completely. It would mean losing our memories, our connections to those we love. If we really found closure, it would ironically hurt even more because the attachment would be severed. And this attachment is vital to us ... the memories are treasures to be held close, not closed out.

Perhaps it is better to think in terms of healing. Yes, we can process our pain and move to deeper and deeper levels of healing. Yes, we can find ways to move on and channel our pain into productive activities. Yes, we can even learn to smile again and laugh again and love again. But let's not ever think that we'll close the door completely on what this loss means, for if we did



that, we would unwittingly close the door on all the love that we shared. And that would truly be a loss too terrible to bear.

-- Ashley Davis Prend, North Idaho, USA

Myth: ***Time Heals the pain of losing a child.***

## Time

Time does not heal the pain of child loss. Time simply puts distance between our initial shock and pain and where we are now. Time adds fear to the bereaved parent's life -- fear that we will forget our child's voice, forget our child's smell, forget the details of our child's face...forget what it felt like to hold our child. No, time does not heal the pain of child loss. Our healing will come when we see our child again in heaven, and so we cling tightly to that hope as we pass through the long, dark valley of time.

--Silent Grief - Child Loss Support



## Misconceptions

Misconceptions about what constitutes normal bereavement can exacerbate the already painful experience of the griever. It can also cause bereaved persons to feel even more isolated and to regard themselves as abnormal. It is painful and difficult enough to grieve, but I believe it adds to the burden when the bereaved feel the need to justify and explain themselves. It is difficult enough to function, to put one foot in front of the other, without the additional burden of choking back tears while making explanations.

This article is intended to validate the painful process that you may now be experiencing and to help educate the non-bereaved with whom you must interact. It is my hope that bereaved persons will show this article to friends, employers, co-workers, or relatives who are unable to understand the bereavement experience.

### **Misconception # 1**

"You look so well! (This is generally said with a tone of amazement in the speakers voice.)

**Answer:** Bereaved people look just like the non-bereaved. They are capable of walking talking and appearing absolutely normal. Though they may feel their lives have been shattered, they usually try to keep their intimate feelings private. When you

comment on how well they look or compose themselves, it is because of your misunderstanding of bereavement.

Expressing astonishment at how well they look and behave can crack the tenuous shell of self-control and make them feel misunderstood and isolated. It is more helpful to quietly acknowledge their pain and the effort it takes to keep functioning.

### **Misconception # 2**

"It's been six months (nine months, etc). You should be able to function normally, now. You should be able to concentrate, to remember things like you did before, to withstand pressure and not burst into tears."

**Answer:** How the bereaved wish that this were true. They would give anything to be "normal" again. They would go anywhere and spend any amount of money to reunite with their loved ones, to ease the terrible pain and sorrow of bereavement. They would love to concentrate and to remember and to not burst into tears, but it is taking all their energy to merely survive.

### **Misconception # 3**

"If I don't mention his/her name, the bereaved will not be reminded of their loss. If I distract them, they will not think of their grief."

**Answer:** The bereaved are thinking of their loved ones anyway. They may feel relieved if you mention the name of the one who died or reminisce about a favorite time. Often, bereaved people have told me how uncomfortable it is for them because people seem to be afraid to mention their child's name. The names of the children are the symbols of people who are still vitally important to the living who loved them.

### **Misconception # 4**

"If I smile, laugh, or love again, I am being unfaithful to the memory of my child or I am 'forgetting'."

**Answer:** This misconception can thwart the healthy resolution of grief. Of course you will never forget; You will always love. It is difficult now to accept that you will be able to smile or laugh or love again, but your abilities to express normal emotion are proof of your capacity for happiness.

-- Susan Arlen, MD Taken from Bereavement Magazine  
Dr. Arlen is Medical Director United Cerebral Palsy of NY, a psychotherapist and an international speaker)

There are things that we don't want to happen  
but have to accept,  
things we don't want to know but have to learn,  
and people we can't live without but have to let go.  
~ author unknown

## Children and Grief - 10 Tips

I've been reading about children and grief in Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's book "On Grief and Grieving. For many children bereavement is a subject that has been treated with silence.

This has led to years of pain. Kubler-Ross reminds us that "Children are old enough to grieve if they are old enough to love; they are the 'forgotten grievers.'" Here are ten points for children and grief that I developed out of the reading:

**1. Initiation on-going conversations.** Some family members do not want to cause more pain for a child, so they assume that if a child isn't asking about the deceased they shouldn't initiate the conversation. Often a child is silent because they don't want to make the parent or other adult sad. Children learn by example.

**2. Let them know mixed emotions are okay.** Sometimes children need to be told that it is okay to be sad or angry. Children, as all human-beings, will respond to loss in the various stages or symptoms of grief.

**3. Use clear language.** Language such as "mommy's gone to heaven" or "grandma's passed away" can add confusion, especially to young children who tend to see death as temporary.

**4. Be available to answer questions.** Even clear communication will be followed up with many questions for children who are unfamiliar with death. A child can often think that he or she is somehow responsible for the death, providing open communication can help clear up their concerns.

**5. Suggest creative self-expression.** Many children have been helped by being able to draw their story of loss. Consider molding clay, building blocks, and paints as invaluable tools to help children express their emotions.

**6. Stability is helpful.** In the midst of a season when so much feels abnormal, it is helpful if many of the simple routines can stay in place.

**7. Reaction to grief is normal.** Remember that reactions to grief are normal—grades may fall, children may lose interest in sports or hobbies they once enjoyed. Keep listening and being available, but do not show anxiety about their normal reactions to grief.

**8. Different children react differently.** Just like adults, in bereavement children respond in a way that is unique to their situation and personality. Some children will grieve in small doses as they



develop and grow.

**9. Consider children's bereavement groups.**

These groups provide understanding peers and professionals who can sympathize and meet the child where he or she is on the grief journey.

**10. Relive the memories.** Sharing favorite stories about the deceased loved one is an excellent way to help children know that it is okay to laugh and enjoy memories. Older children may enjoy creating a memory book. For younger children, write up their favorite stories for them to have in the years to come.

--Elizabeth Kubler-Ross fills her chapter with both beautiful and sad illustrations of how children have experienced grief. She ends with this challenge, "We spend so much time teaching our children about life, why not do the same with death?"

--[www.journey-through-grief.com](http://www.journey-through-grief.com)

## Hey, It's OK

To let go of your child's death,  
To embrace your child's life,  
To lose your expectations,  
To grieve anyway you want,  
To give yourself a break,  
To believe in signs,  
To stop hating,

To forgive,  
To smile without guilt,  
To find joy,  
To heal,  
To begin to live again,  
To laugh,  
To love yourself,  
It's okay,  
It's all okay.

-- author unknown

## Musings on Halloweens Past and Present

On the evening I type this, the nip in the October air is a reminder that the major holidays are just around the corner. Halloween decorations have been in the stores since July and Christmas decor even as early as August. For those of us who are bereaved parents, siblings and/or grandparents this means the sooner they are "in our face" the longer we have the constant reminders that we will be facing the

holidays without our child. Whether it is your first Halloween following your child's death or years down the road, such as in my situation, the holiday season stirs the emotions bringing varying levels of sadness, anxiety and sometimes even anger. With Halloween, there is the sorrow of no longer having to find that perfect costume or witnessing the delight in your child's eyes when you found just the right one.

Many parents find Halloween a particularly hard one to get through. In the past, I always thought of it as innocuous enough; there were the costume parties with bobbing for apples, children excitedly dashing door-to-door trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, and the occasional harmless prank. However, after my daughter Nina died, I became acutely aware of things that I never gave a second thought to in the past. For instance, my former neighbor made her whole front yard into a graveyard scene, complete with fake headstones that said R.I.P. with scary or silly epitaphs as well as hideous ghosts coming out of the earth with bony bloody fingers.

Before Nina died, I too found the cemetery "creepy" but now I look at it differently, even with a sort of reverence, and no longer have a problem going out to my daughter's grave-site, even in the middle of the night. I find the solitude of the historic countryside graveyard where she is buried peaceful and dignified and worthy of respect, and I was hurt by what I felt was apparent ridicule and disdain for the final resting place of our loved ones' physical bodies to the point of tears and anger. Moreover, some of the masks and costumes portrayed faces of death in a way that I found highly offensive, especially since I knew many who lost their children to some of the means depicted. I took it personally and didn't appreciate what I perceived as a mockery of death.

Though I still don't pretend to understand the allure of the above-mentioned Halloween depictions, they aren't as painful to me as they were the first few years after Nina died. During the early grief years, we become very hypersensitive to our surroundings and more keenly conscious of anything related to death. It is pretty hard to look past the general non-bereaved population's seeming nonchalance about something we take so personally. Though we wish there was more empathy and understanding, we also know all too well that they cannot truly sympathize unless they also have walked in our shoes.

It is easy to forget that we too, before our

children's deaths, may have shown the same indifference. I believe that we would like to think that we wouldn't have been so callous because we now personally know how much this hurts those affected; however, before we lost our "innocence," truth be told, we probably didn't give any of it much thought. That being said, oftentimes it is still easier said than done.

On this 10th Halloween without Nina, I pretty much ignore all the ghoulishness surrounding this time of year. If I do find I am having difficulty, I try very hard to focus on positive and precious memories of Halloween's past. Such as her belated birthday/Halloween party where our basement became a makeshift haunted house where giggling blindfolded costumed witches and princesses plunged their hands into bowls full of peeled grape "eyeballs" and wet macaroni "brains" to the shrieks of "Yuck!," or the photo taken of Nina on her last Halloween. No longer of trick-or-treat age, she stayed home to pass out the candy and carve an awesome Jack-a-Lantern that she is pictured proudly along side, with her ever-present smile and that wonderful twinkle in her brown eyes. Or the photos I have of her in her costumes over the years from Care Bear to Punk Rocker.

Because of my photographs and precious memories, I also realize that I was one of the "lucky" ones in that regard. There are those whose children died before they ever had the opportunity to create memories, there is the sorrow that they were never able to experience even one holiday with that child, yet alone several.

For those with a missing trick-or-treater this Halloween or the conspicuous empty chair at Thanksgiving dinner this year, the first ones are the most difficult. Though I find they are easier to bear as time goes on, you never really forget the absence from the family holiday gatherings of one loved so much, nor do you want to forget, really. Please try to remember that this roller coaster of grief ride each year brings different feelings. It is important that you just allow those feelings and let them happen. Try not to be waylaid by other's expectations of you. Trust your instincts and go with them. Truly, only you know what you can or cannot handle.

With gentle thoughts, Cathy Seehutter  
--TCF St. Paul, MN



## When a Life Breaks...

After suicide, the first commandment is kindness, both toward the life that has broken and toward ourselves. We need to beware of using against ourselves some preconceived notions about suicide. If our child has taken his or her own life, many people feel compelled to comment that the dead sufferer should not have hurt THAT much. Moreover, the religious community removes grace, the social community judges character, the medical community pronounces insanity. If the concept of unbearable pain is admitted at all, we are told that either (1) the suicide's faith was weak, or (2) her/his expectations were immodest, or (3) she/he was mean and selfish. It must have been a weakling who said, "Every person has his or her breaking point"...right? WRONG.

The truth is that most of us have wondered about ending it all ... because life does SEEM unmanageable at times. And we acknowledge the possibility that life is unmanageable for long stretches. Who is to say that we are always obliged or able to meet an overwhelming darkness with the strength and/or the will of heroic supersaint? We are all vulnerable, we can all feel lost and frightened and without hope. It's arrogant to assume that everyone is equipped to overcome even the most extreme challenge (whether real or imaginary) with fortitude, mastery, and SUCCESS.

Some of us are angry after a suicide has happened close to us. Most of us are incredibly hurt and helpless. We feel betrayed, we feel abandoned, even punished. We often blame ourselves for some carelessness, some omission, some selfishness, some cruelty, which caused that fatal break of life ... it can be a long time, before there comes a small and unexpected comfort: when reality reminds us that the suicide was, as it were, bigger than life.

Western society has little love for those who take their own life, nor for those who are left behind. But we CAN cross the boundaries of misguided opinion, and we can try to see beyond the camouflage of traditional superstitions.

Yes, the first (though not the easiest) commandment is kindness: Be good to yourself. Give love and honor to the memory of that broken life.

--From *The Sorrow and the Light* by Sascha Wagner

## A Father's Point of View - The Loss of an Infant Son

How does it feel to be a father that has lost his first born son? At first it was like the world was the worst place to be. The pain and anguish were so great that I just could not bear it. Many men have said to me, "I don't know how you can bear it." They make it sound like I have a choice. All I really wanted to do was die with him.

My son was only 2 months old, but I can tell you that in those 2 months he taught me the importance of family and love and how precious life can be. At the same time, he taught me how fragile we are and how vulnerable we are. He touched me so deeply that he was able to physically and emotionally change who and what I am.

People that have never experienced this type of loss will never know how it can change a person. When you lose a child you lose all of your hopes and dreams. People can't understand that your life is forever changed.

When you lose a baby people can be very cruel. They feel that you could not be emotionally attached, since you do not have too many

memories of his life. You should just have another child and the pain will go away. People do not realize that it is not how many memories you have of a child, but that bond you have from when you see them for the first time. That bond is why it hurts so much whether he is a baby, child, teenager, or adult. It does not matter. You have lost something so precious that only people that have experienced it could understand.

As a father who now has a beautiful 2- year-old son, the pain does not go away. Sometimes it can be worse. Every step and every thing that my son does is wonderful, but it also reminds me that Brandon did not get a chance to do the same things. Time has helped me reach an understanding of how short life is and to not take my new child for granted. Brandon has taught me to cherish every breath and every smile Ethan has to offer. By my doing this I will continue to honor Ethan's big brother, Brandon.

--David Orozco. Potomac, MD, TCF



## Seasoned Greivers...

### The Promise

Your birth brought me starshine,  
the moon and the sun;  
my wishes, dreams gathered  
'round my little one.

My life became sacred,  
full of promise and light,  
all wrapped in the girl-child  
who brought love at first sight.

The years of your living  
filled with laughter and tears,  
excitement, adventure,  
some boredom, some fears,

but ended too quickly,  
ahead of its time,  
the loss so horrendous  
such heartbreak was mine.

But from the beginning,  
one thought rose so clear;  
never would your death erase  
the years that you were here.

I would not be defeated  
or diminished by your death;  
I would hang on, learn to conquer,  
if it took my last breath.

For if your death destroyed my life,  
Made both our lives a waste,  
'twould deny your life's meaning  
and all the love you gave.

I vowed that years of sadness  
would change, with work and grace,  
to years of happiness, even joy,  
in which you'd have a place.

Memories of you, like shining stars  
in the patterns of my soul,  
are beacons flashing light and love,  
and with them I am whole.

In your honor, I live my life,  
now living it for two.  
Through all my life, you too will live,

You lived, you live, you do.

—Genesse Bourdeau, *Stars In The Deepest Night* by  
Genesse Bourdeau Gentry is available on Amazon

## Newly Bereaved...

### Thoughts When You Are Depressed

- ❖ Don't ever try to understand everything; some things will just never make sense.
  - ❖ Don't ever be reluctant to show your feelings, when you're happy, give in to it.
  - ❖ Don't ever be afraid to try to make things better, you might be surprised at the results.
  - ❖ There is always somebody there for you to reach out to.
  - ❖ Don't ever forget that you can achieve so many of the things you can imagine. Imagine that!
  - ❖ Don't ever stop loving; don't ever stop believing and don't ever stop dreaming your dreams.
- TCF Orange Coast, CA newsletter

## For Friends and Family...



### Why Don't You Call Me Anymore?

She calls to talk and asks how I am doing so I tell her of gut-wrenching days and questions of "why?" Longings to hold my son again. Quickly, she lets me know how she is. Parties and vacations, new friends and clubs, and hanging up, I miss what I had and loathe what I am. I read the books, I meet others like me who yearn to kiss their cherub's face who exist in the horrendous, bottomless pit. And I learn life is: cruel, unfair, senseless, but through it all I become more real, holding a deeper faith that works even in this pit. After time, I call her to see how she is and want to tell her about Death and Living but her life is still an extended picnic. So we have a pseudo conversation. I can not explain for she is not able to understand the beauty of who I am and now, I accept why my phone doesn't ring.

--By Alice J. Wislet      Durhan, N. C



## Welcome...

### The Long Road Back



Lost in a pit of deep despair,  
darkness and grief and pain,  
Searching to find someone who'd care,  
who'd give me hope again.

I saw a sign like shining gold,  
found where the rainbow ends,  
Pointing towards a rocky road,  
it said "Compassionate Friends."

Thinking, it would not hurt to try,  
for what could hurt me more?  
I sadly made my weary way,  
and gently tried the door.

A flood of warmth came out to me,  
soft voices seemed to say,  
"Come in my friend and share your grief,  
we'll help you on your way.

We too have walked the same sad path,  
and sought a helping hand,  
And we have found so many friends  
who care and understand."

My long road back began that day,  
and though it often bends,  
My love and thanks go out to all  
my dear Compassionate Friends.  
--Betty Kenna TCF, UK

Editor's note: We encourage you to try our meetings. The deep understanding that only another bereaved parent feels can be helpful in your grief. We are here to help ... You need not walk alone.



## Helpful Hint...

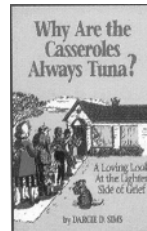
### Writing - A Self-Help Form of Therapy

It can be helpful to write about the death, the days leading up to and away from it, the details and events that form the fabric and the scenario. Thoughts and feelings that are just too painful to express in words can now find their way on paper. The pictures within will take concrete form through the written word. Whether sudden or anticipated,

death often leaves the bereaved with an overwhelming sense of unfinished business, a need for completion. Writing offers an opportunity to say what could not be said when the loved one was alive. In addition, it offers a chance to say goodbye. "We all possess the innate ability to heal ourselves. Writing heals the heart, the mind and the soul. Each written work opens doors to the past and to the future, and to a heightened sense of peacefulness and emotional well-being. Therapeutic writing becomes a gift to oneself and to the one we've loved and lost."

--Excerpted from *WRITEAWAY, Thoughts on the Art of Writing To Heal* by Joannetta Hendel in Bereavement Magazine

## Book in Review...



***Why Are The Casseroles Always Tuna? A Loving Look At the Lighter Side of Grief*** By Darcie Sims. A collection of thoughts about the needs of the grieving. If you are grieving, you know how important it is to find some comfort, joy, and even humor.

## The Butterfly

Butterfly, don't pass me by. Stop and light for a little while.

Soothe me with your soft sensation;  
give me hope and consolation.

Butterfly, don't pass me by. Stop and light for a little while.

Help me to release my sorrow;  
deed me strength to meet tomorrow.

Butterfly, don't pass me by. Stop and light for a little while.

Oh, lift me up and let me feel the  
peace and freedom you reveal.

Butterfly, don't pass me by. Stop and light for a little while.

Remind me to thank God above  
for cradling me in His great love.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted - Psalm 34:18

--Connie Wade, in memory of Emily Elizabeth Ellis

## A Meeting Friday Night

Would anyone understand?  
 If I had the courage to tell a special story about you  
 at the meeting Friday night--  
 Would anyone have understood?  
 You were handicapped,  
 a "special" child,  
 different and because of that  
 some might think losing you was not a tragedy.  
 Some professionals felt your existence was a  
 tragedy!  
 Few understood how lucky we were to have you.  
 What enormous gifts you gave to us!  
 I knew ... You taught me how to love.  
 I cherished you, just as you were.  
 So sweet, so innocent.  
 How many mothers are lucky enough  
 to be able to rock their twenty-six year old child in  
 their arms every night?  
 I never forgot the lullabies;  
 you loved it when I sang them to you.  
 I spent YEARS memorizing your sweet face, hands,  
 feet, smile ...  
 so I'd be able to remember you all my life.  
 In case we were parted ...  
 We had our own language, you and I.  
 I talked, you "listened".  
 (You were supposed to be deaf--I knew better ...  
 And when you were thirsty or tired  
 you looked at me,  
 and I somehow KNEW what you were feeling.  
 I felt when you were happy, content, angry, or  
 uncomfortable. (How IS that possible?)  
 But I slept soundly, unaware,  
 as you lay dying in your room  
 a few feet from me.  
 I had not a clue, not a suspicion.  
 Did you choose not to "tell" me  
 because it was time for you to go?  
 I would not have let you go without a fight;  
 and you did know that.  
 I will forever wonder, and I will forever hurt.  
 I expected to have an opportunity to fight  
 for your life at the end ...  
 I was good at fighting for you.  
 There will not be another chance, now.  
 Rest well, my love ... my sweet baby girl.  
 I pray we meet again.

--Sally Migliaccio TCF of Syosset, New York  
 Tracey, daughter of Dave and Sally Migliaccio, was  
 handicapped. She died unexpectedly and peacefully in her  
 sleep on July 1, 1994, at the age of 26.

## What Cancer Cannot Do

Cancer is so limited . . .  
 It cannot cripple love,  
 It cannot shatter hope,  
 It cannot corrode faith,  
 It cannot destroy peace,  
 It cannot kill friendship,  
 It cannot suppress memories,  
 It cannot silence courage,  
 It cannot invade the soul,  
 It cannot steal external life,  
 It cannot conquer the spirit.  
 --Mo-Kan Newsletter

## Letting Go

I'm not sure exactly what it means.  
 Does letting go suggest I forget my dreams?  
 Am I to stop my crying?  
 Not harp on the one whose dying has caused  
 such pain and sorrow  
 And took my hopes of tomorrow.  
 Letting go means I have to go on  
 Not wish I could change what is done.  
 Must I put aside this great love now?  
 I don't really know how.  
 Is letting go the only way  
 Of living life day to day?  
 Will giving up my sadness and pain  
 Relieve my heart of its constant strain?  
 Is letting go a requirement  
 For replacing a love that's already spent?  
 But I can't let this go,  
 I'm not ready to know  
 About a new life without her  
 I want things as they were!  
 To me letting go is insane.  
 For it seems to me there is nothing to gain.  
 I'm prepared to live without letting go,  
 Don't tell me I'm wrong, you just don't know.  
 --Ginny Schlecta, TCF Charlottesville VA

The Compassionate Friends is about  
 transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope.  
 It takes people out of the isolation society imposes  
 on the bereaved and lets them express their grief  
 naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing  
 comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people  
 who have survived and are learning to live and love  
 again." --Simon Stephens, Founder of  
 The Compassionate Friends



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

Brandon Armstrong  
Miscarried: July 1995  
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joel Draper  
Born: 1/84 Died: 5/2004  
Mother: Tracy Solis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christie Hagenburger  
Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17  
Father: D.W. Hagenburger



Jennifer Nicole Hower  
Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04  
Brother: Jeff Hower

Rachel Suzanne Hoyt  
Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95  
Sister: Laura Hoyt D'anna

Sarah Jade Hurley  
Born: 6/97 Died: 5/17  
Father: Tim Hurley  
Grandmother: Laurie Hurley

Steven Ishikawa  
Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17  
Mother: Miki Ishikawa

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

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

Emily Matilda Kass  
Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06  
Mother: Susan Kass

Jillian Nicole Katnic  
Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18  
Mother: Debbie Hughes

Douglas Drennen Kay  
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06  
Parents: Diane & Steve Kay

Kathryn Anne Kelly  
Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91  
Parents: Dick & Timmy Kelly

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

Colby Joshua Koenig  
Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10  
Parents: Cindy Tobis & John Koenig

Scott Koller  
Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15  
Mother: Betty Benson

Keith Konopasek  
Born: 1/63 Died: 7/95  
Parents: Ken & Mary Konopasek

Michael Kroppman  
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12  
Parents: Brenda & Greg Kroppman

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

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

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

Jeremy Stewert Mead  
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Carol Mead

Robert Andrew Mead  
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11  
Mother: Carol Mead

Nicole Marie Megaloudis  
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04  
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-Rongen

Shawn Mellen  
Born: 05/81 Died: 8/99  
Godmother: Rose Sarukian

Damion Mendoza  
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92  
Parents: Carlene & Paul Mendoza

Christopher Metsker  
Born: 11/94 Died: 3/18  
Parents: Justin & Tara Metsker

Steven Douglas Millar  
Born: 2/70 Died: 10/00  
Parents: David & Suzanne Millar

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

Jacki Montoya  
Born: 10/89 Died: 6/15  
Mother: Theresa Montoya

Joshua Montoya  
Born: 4/15 Died: 6/15  
Grandmother: Theresa Montoya

Danielle Ann Mosher  
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97  
Parents: Paul & Rose Mary Mosher

Benjamin A. Moutes  
Born: 3/07 Died: 5/10  
Parents: Kevin & Claudia Moutes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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: Lisa Sandoval Sept. 1976 - Dec. 1992



Dear Lisa,

Twenty seven years of celebrating your birthday with nothig more than memories and smiles. Forty four years, yet you'll always be 16!

Love You Baby Girl, Mom

## For Siblings...



### Sibling Grief - Certain Words

My mother paged me while I was at work this afternoon, and I called her at home. She asked if I would like to go see a movie. Her question triggered many thought waves. I wanted to go with her, to be with her, but I couldn't just leave work. I wish I could have protected her from the loneliness. She was having a rough day like me, and I needed to talk. How was dad at work? Was he struggling to perform like me? Did he have to concentrate to finish anything?

I regret not doing what is most important. I should have talked with my boss and left work to be with my mother when she wanted to spend time with me. I feel great sympathy for my parents, but I have to admit that I don't grieve with them. We don't grieve together. We talk about it, but we usually grieve on our own. I'm guilty of trying to protect them in the same way that my friends try to protect me.

My parents say, "We are here for you. Call us when you need us."

I say, "I know. I will."

They say, "You haven't. You know we think about it every day, all the time. We can talk about it."

I say, "I don't want to be depressing."

They say, "You can be depressing with us. It is depressing."

I say, "I know. I know. I'm here for you too. I just don't want to come out there and cry. I want to be positive."

I think about how I always say "it" referring to the car accident, to Chris' death. I should say "him." I say "it" because the accident took his life; it was the turning point. I am really talking about Chris, his life, and his absence. I'm tired of thinking about the accident, picturing the scene, remembering Chris' last words, and imagining him as he arrived at the hospital. These things are too painful. It is hard to say that Chris died or that he is dead. If I say that he died, in my mind, it implies that he was sick or weak and that he could not sustain himself any longer. He was vibrant and healthy and full of life. The life didn't leave him on its own; it was knocked out of him in a car accident.

I know that there are people who are walking along the street when they suddenly die. They were also vibrant and full of life. This is just an example of one of our little struggles. I hear surviving siblings say, "My brother was killed in a car accident. A tumor killed my sister. My little brother lost his life to an accidental drug overdose. My big sister didn't make it through surgery." We generally prefer to say that something is responsible for taking the life of our sibling. Saying that he died on a Monday doesn't place accountability for his death on any event. If the event had not occurred, our siblings would still be here, so we feel a need to mention the event in connection with the death.

It is difficult to say that my brother is dead. It is shocking to hear myself say it. The word is final and leaves no questions. It lets you know that Chris is gone forever. He's not going to show up later in the evening. He is not going to call. He is not going to write a letter. He is dead. I hate to say it. He did die and he is dead, but I squirm when I say it like that. It is so matter of fact.

-- Scott Mastley, Duluth, GA reprinted with permission [www.survivingasibling.com](http://www.survivingasibling.com) reprinted from TCF Atlanta Newsletter

## For Siblings

Do you ever feel that you are on a roller coaster ride in your grief over the death of your brother or sister?

There are lots of ups and downs. Sometimes the pain is so overwhelming that your heart aches and grief rushes over you. At other times, the grief

subsides, and you go on living your life.

For siblings, the roller coaster ride can last for many years after the death of a brother or sister. That's because at every significant milestone or event in our lives, the grief rises to the surface, and we once again confront the death of our brother or sister. For our parents, difficult times may be important events that would have occurred in our brother or sister's life; at a certain age, they would have gone to kindergarten, graduated from high school, got a job, got married, had children, and so forth. While mourning the death of their son or daughter, our parents grieve the absence of the event from the parent's life.

While we, as bereaved siblings, may also grieve these events that our brother or sister no longer experience, what is different for us is that these events are actually occurring in our lives. We must live each event without our brother or sister. And this occurs over and over throughout our lives, as we progress through childhood and adulthood, through the happy times and the sad times.

I have seen this occur in my life during the eleven years since my brother, Jerry, died. As time has passed, my grief has changed. I don't cry as often, and I don't visit his grave as often. In that sense, my grief does not weigh as heavily on my heart as it did at first. However, as I have become older and passed through various stages of my life, my grief has resurfaced many times.

My brother was 21 when he died. I was 22. Although he was at my college graduation and he saw me get my first real job, he wasn't there to give me his opinion when I was trying to decide whether to quit my job or go back to school. He wasn't there when I graduated from law school and passed the bar exam. When I got married a year ago he wasn't standing at the front of the church with me. If my husband and I decide to have children, he won't be there as an uncle to celebrate the child's birth. When my parents grow old and decisions have to be made about their health, he won't be there to help me.

As those events have occurred in my life it is as though I am on a roller coaster ride, approaching a hill. I feel my grief coming on again, with the same intensity of those first weeks and months after he died. I am scared and uncertain as the roller coaster struggles to reach the top and then rushes down the hill to the bottom, on its way to another hill. When you eventually come down on the other side of each of those hills, it is with great sense of relief that you made it.

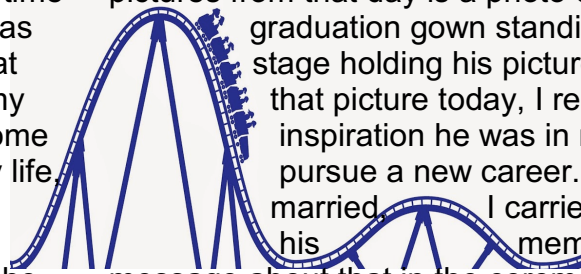
When I got married about a year ago, it was the climbing the hill that was the tough part. The two months before the wedding were the worst. In addition to all the headaches of planning a wedding, I cried a lot realizing that my brother was not going to be there for one of the happiest days of my life. I thought about how handsome he would look in his tuxedo, how proud he would be of his big sister, and what a great friendship he would have with my husband, his brother-in-law. While I still think about these things, they took much more of an emotional toll on me in the months before the wedding. When I reach the hill—the wedding day—I did not feel as overcome with grief and was already coming down on the other side.

The way that I made it through my wedding and have been able to face the other "hills" in the roller coaster ride of my grief is to include him in these events just as if he were here. For example, when I have to make a tough decision, I ask myself what advice Jerry would have given me. When I graduated from law school, I took a framed picture of him with me to the graduation. One of my favorite pictures from that day is a photo of me in my graduation gown standing in front of the stage holding his picture. When I look at that picture today, I realize what an inspiration he was in my decision to pursue a new career. When I got married, I carried my bouquet in his memory and printed a message about that in the ceremony program, along with a thought about him. In addition to the many family pictures taken that day are ones of me holding Jerry's picture. At the wedding reception, I had the disc jockey play a song in his memory.

Although Jerry isn't here anymore and all I have left of him are memories of years past, including him in my life today creates new memories. It has become so important to include him in these events that not doing something special would seem odd. I look forward to the challenge of thinking of unique ways to include him in my life. And I don't care what other people may think about me doing special things in his memory.

However, the reactions from people have been positive. When others become aware of what you are doing, they often share their own losses with you. After a friend attended my wedding and saw the special ways that I had included my brother, I learned for the first time that he had a sister who died. This created a new bond with a friend.

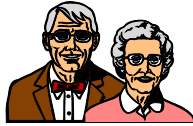
If significant events in your life include holidays,



there are many possibilities. Create a special gift for your parents in memory of your brother or sister. Write down favorite memories of your sibling and have everyone read them. Or share one thing that your brother or sister gave you or that you learned from him or her, whether it is an article of clothing or toy or a personal trait such as your sense of humor or your fighting spirit.

Our brothers and sisters existed. Recognizing their lives as milestones in our own lives can help us in our roller coaster ride of grief. It can help keep the memory of our brothers and sisters alive, even if they aren't.

--Dawn Morville, Springfield, IL



## For Grandparents...

### She Would Be Turning 7 this Year

Posted on June 17th, 2019

As you lay there sleeping,  
gently lay your head,  
dreams of your future  
dancing through my head.  
At one, you'd be walking  
Scurrying around,  
getting into mischief,  
feet firmly on the ground.  
At two, your words start forming,  
at three a sentence clear,  
as grandpa reads you stories  
keeps you safe and warm and near.  
By four, you're learning numbers,  
five headed off to school,  
sitting in a classroom with friends,  
that is so cool!  
At six, you'd be excited,  
a part in the school play!  
What a glorious feeling  
as the years just slip away.  
But then I wake at morning and  
see that you're not here  
but, only while I'm sleeping,  
and shed another tear.

--Ian Rowanian's granddaughter Sophia was born 6/14/12 at 23 weeks, she fought for nine hours but wasn't able to hold on. She would have been 7 on 6/14/19.

## From Our Members...

—nothing submitted this month—  
Please share something you wrote or read that could help another bereaved parent to



Lynntcf@aol.com for the next newsletter.

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, Oct1st @ 7:00 p.m. We will be having virtual meetings until we can meet in person. We send 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.

**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: Oct. 1st for Nov. 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.tcfsla.org](http://www.tcfsla.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.



- Lori Galloway(chapter leader).....(760) 521-0096
- Linda Zelik (former leader).....(310) 370-1645
- 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
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.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

Marilyn Nemeth

Cheryl & Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Kitty Edler

Sandra & Eddie Myricks



Loir Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Ken Konopasek

Susan Kass

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

**Support Online Groups:**

**Parents/Grandparents/Siblings**

**Suicide Loss**

**Pregnancy/Infant**

**Bereaved Less than Two Years**

**Bereaved More than Two Years**

**No Surviving Children**

**Loss to Substance Related Causes**





# 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 Anne Smith, deceased June 2020. A pancreatic cancer heroine.  
From, Donna Goodman

In loving memory of Mark Scott Galper, February 1962 - May 1997. To my sweetest son. I miss you and your smiles and hugs.  
I Love You, Mom

In loving memory of my daughter Lisa Michelle Sandoval, September 1976 - December, 1992. Happy Birthday in Heaven.  
We Love and Miss you, Your Family

In loving memory of our long time TCF member, Carlene Mendoza, who went to be with her wonderful son Damion. Our thoughts and prayers are with Paul and their 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  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510

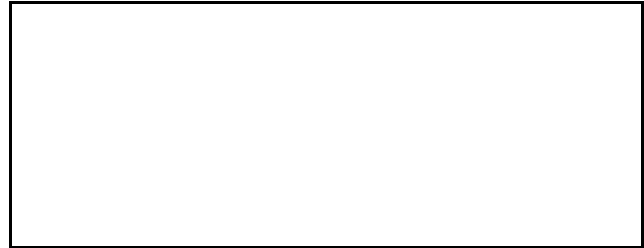
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–Return Service Requested–



**October 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.