



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

November 2020 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

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

LOCATION:

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

The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Nov. 5th Virtual meeting is coming using Zoom. See page 16 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

The TCF Sharing group has been moved to Hoff's Hut's outdoor dining area (Crenshaw & 237th St. in Torrance) 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.

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
**We need a Co-leader
Could that be you?**
Lori Galloway (760) 521-0096
Lorijog01@gmail.com

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

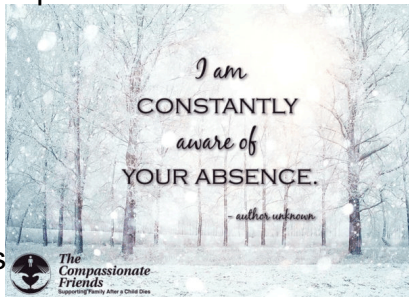
The Nov 5th Zoom meeting will start with **“Feeling” your way through the loss of a child.** Everyone has heard of the five stages of grief. Most of us have never had to face the emotional “feeling” aspect of that grief. This month’s topic will deal with the many different feelings it takes to accommodate the pain of having your precious child die. From the shock, disbelief and denial of it happening to “My Child”, you are bombarded with raw sensations. With the emotional bargaining with your higher power to have a different outcome...and the anger and overwhelming anguish when it doesn’t happen, to the surge of emotions we must endure to climb out of the depression that follows, we experience a barrage of feelings. When we acknowledge how our desperation invades our every decision, we can eliminate the fear of going crazy from the pain, to a conscious decision of accepting the facts of the loss, and turning that awareness into hope of a future without your child by your side. All this is done with the emotional anxiety of pain and is mind-boggling... but attainable. Join us on Zoom as we share our own stories of what we went/or are going through. Hearing how other bereaved parents have coped helps us feel that there is hope for our own loss.

Rebuilding Your Life One Piece at a Time

Death, especially unexpected death, changes one’s life in ways that cannot be expected. With the death of someone close, one’s world is forever changed.

One analogy I have found myself using with clients is the following: If you were to imagine the day before your loved one died, there was an intact picture of your life. The picture may not have been perfect, but it was there and it made sense. There was a beginning, a middle and an expected end. With death comes the destruction of that picture. It is as if the picture is taken out of your hands, smashed to the ground in a thousand pieces and then some of the most treasured pieces are forever taken away.

The challenge with grief is to then take all of those pieces which are left and attempt to make a new picture. The picture of the life you once had is impossible to recreate, as much as one may try, it cannot be recreated with pieces missing. A new



picture must be assembled with the pieces that are left and with new pieces that are picked up along the way.

The process of “putting the pieces back together” is one that often feels chaotic and confusing. It may sometimes be surprising to find out how much thinking is involved in the grief process. Thoughts bounce around trying to connect “what was” with “what is” and we struggle to make sense out of what seems to be incomprehensible.

With each piece, the bereaved, through trial and error, find where each piece belongs or even if it belongs at all. This process is different for every person and does not adhere to any kind of timeline. This (what feels like endless) thinking is the work that grief demands – it is the creation of a new picture of your life – created one piece at a time.

--Written by Stephanie Elson, lifted from the Tears to Hope August/September 2007 newsletter of The Amelia Center, Birmingham, AL, providing a place of hope for grieving children, parents and families, www.ameliacenter.org

5 Rights of the Grieving Parent

1) **You have the right to your feelings.** No one knows exactly what it is like for you to lose your child. No one has walked the exact same path as you. No one has lost THIS child who was unique in his or her own special way. You have a right to feel how you feel about your loss. Some days will be better than others. Today might be a good day, moments of laughter might even occur, but that doesn’t mean two years from now a deep sadness might not wash over you and you will be tearing up when back to school time rolls around and you’re one child short when dropping the kids off to school that day. You get to have all of these emotions and experience them and don’t let anyone else tell you otherwise.

2) **You have the right to grieve however you choose.** Remember the saying, “There is no right or wrong way to grieve.” We are all unique, therefore the ways we grieve the loss of our child will be unique. If you decide to keep their room the same and untouched for a year after their death, that’s fine. If you still have cake and a celebration on their birthday every year, great! If you get a tattoo in remembrance and it’s out of the ordinary for you, super! None of these are more appropriate or better than the other. As long as you are not hurting yourself physically or emotionally, there really is no “right” or “wrong” way to do this. Only your way.

3) **You have the right to grieve for however long you need.** Similar in nature to # 2. There is also another great saying, "There is no time limit on grief." I'm sorry to say you will carry the weight from the loss of your child with you throughout the rest of your life. You will remember them until you can no longer breathe. Don't let people tell you otherwise. Yes, the grief will shift and morph and move. Some days it will be as if it's not there at all while others will be a heavy burden to bear, but it will never fully or completely go away. And this is okay. You have the right to grieve for as long or as little as you need, even if it's a lifetime because this grief is great because the love was great.

4) **You have the right to find peace when ready.** At first grief hurts. There are really no words to describe the pain that comes from losing a child. It is disorientating, out of life's order of events, and feels so soul-crushing. When it first happens, and in the months and years after, it may seem as if any sense of peace will never find you again. However, over time, it will come. It won't ever be the same sense of peace you felt before loss; you know the one that has innocence tag along with it by its side. It will be a sense of settling into the vulnerability of your soul. It's a place of knowing the pain and being accepting of it. Not necessarily okay with it, but a realization that peace and pain can exist on the same plane, in the same space and at the same time. You have a right to find this place and embrace it when you are ready. Don't let anyone else force you there; it's a place you must find on your own time and at your own speed.

5) **You have the right to remember and speak their name.** You know when people ask you that silly now confusing question of, "How many children do you have?" Guess what? You have the right to give the real answer. You should say their name as much and as often as you like. Include their name in holiday cards say their name in nightly prayers. As they say, "My child did exist," and you have a right in remembering and speaking of their life and the love they brought to it and in many ways still do. I mean if we don't remember who will? It's our right as bereaved parents to carry their memory with us for as long as our heart beats and speak their name as much as we desire as it is music to our soul.
—Tampa Bay TCF newsletter, March 2015

"Grief is a sacred time, where we can rearrange our fragments into a new design."

—Author unknown

Hope

Hope is especially important when there is nothing you can do. It's a passive sort of coping. People with a strong faith...are the ones who stick it out in the worst circumstances. In American culture, there is a powerful equation that says to lose control is to lose everything. But the most serious problems—a terrible accident, a major disease—are those in which we are objectively helpless. Then the best way to cope is to find out how to live with it. It's fine to keep fighting when you can change your situation. But when you can't change the facts, accept them. That's the key to health and to wisdom.

--Shlomo Breznitz, Director, Center for the Study of Psychological Stress, University of Haifa



Grief Is like A Bucket Of Water....

You can start out with a full bucket, but when you find it too heavy to carry, you can bump it a little, so that some spills, and carry it a little farther. As you continue, you bump it again so that it becomes lighter to carry for the longer distance. You must do the same with grief. To keep the burden from becoming intolerable, you must "bump the bucket" a little and let a little of your grief spill out from time to time, so that you can continue.

--author unknown....lovingly lifted by Nina
From TCF Cape Fear Chapter Wilmington, NC

The Bumpy Road

The other day I sat alone and realized my heart was not as heavy. Oh, there are still times when I miss my child desperately, but I seem to rebound sooner now.

Then the phone rang—another mother called to lean on me. She must have known that I was ready. I listened, she shared and oh how I felt for her. When we said good-bye, I sat again but not as alone this time. New strength and pride came in knowing I had lent a helping hand.

My child's death has taught me so much new, a lot I wished I had never known. But since I do now know what others face, perhaps the bumpy road I've traveled can be made a little smoother for another.
--A Bereaved Mother Tyler TX nl



The Bereaved Father

A father does not find his job easy. The responsibilities he faces are enormous.

Everything from finance to being a good role model, tests a man's ability to be the best father he can be. It is a

job charged with emotional, physical, and mental challenge. A father's roles might include husband and lover, son, friend, boss, co-worker ... to name a few. The relationships he has are numerous, complex, and always changing. One event in particular can really put all these relationships and roles to the test: the death of his child.

The bereaved father is a unique individual. Unfortunately, his uniqueness and attendant problems are often not understood by others, or even by himself. His child's death puts extraordinary demands on him. All the roles he fills change, and his life truly is never the same again. That is not to say that it cannot ever be as good, but rather that the circumstances are going to be different.

When a child dies, it seems that the majority of sympathy is directed toward the mother. This is usually because she is much more open in her grieving; thus it is easy to focus on her emotional needs. But what of the grieving father? His other roles may actually prevent him from working out his grief. As husband and provider, he is usually the one who sees to the practical matters around the death: funeral arrangement, notification of people, arrangement for sibling care, etc. It may be days, weeks, or month before things are settled to the point that he thinks deeply about what has happened. In most cases, he is back to work and into his usual routine so quickly that he may even find himself comforted by this. The impact of the child's death may be lessened to a degree. Away from the house, it may be easier to "forget" what happened.

In our society we are taught in subtle, and not so subtle, ways that men don't cry and that, in general, they are not at all open about their emotions. Thus, many men are denied a perfectly good emotional release mechanism: crying. Even in the privacy of his own home, a man may feel that he has to "be the strong one." Our experience has taught us that men who use crying as a tool in their grief work have fewer long-term adjustment problems. Since men

often suppress their feelings, good and bad, how they are coping with their child's death may never come to the surface, unless they make a special effort in that direction.

--by Bob Steiner

Jana

I've read the last reader's comments; I've marked the last draft; and I've printed the last copy. I've turned off my computer. I have finished the book. But am I done? No. I am never done thinking and writing about Jana. Will I get over living with this deep hole in my heart? No.

I have passed many of Jana's death anniversaries and many of her birthday celebrations, and I reflect: I have lived through some of those days without the huge elephant standing on my chest. I don't recall the specific day I felt less anger, but gradually some ordinary days returned. I began to rise, stand, and move slowly. I felt a little stronger, I no longer struggled in the dark abyss as I did after Jana's death. Now, I experience persons or words that help me climb out of darkness. I start again.

Even though Jana is gone, moments come when I can sense her presence; I smell roasted turkey and remember the many Thanksgiving dinners Jana made. I think I see her standing a distance away wearing overalls with a madras backpack slung over her shoulder. I hear Jana's voice inside my head: "If I've told you once, Mom, I've told you a hundred times: Don't leave the house wearing high-water pants." I remember sitting in coffee shops, reading and talking many afternoons with her. I hear music from The Beatles, and I ponder the lack of Jana's presence.

When these thoughts come, I tumble down into darkness. I think about Jana's short life of nineteen years. I cry, usually alone, and again feel the elephant standing on my chest. After several days or weeks, I suspect Jana says: "OK, Mom. It's time to get up. DO SOMETHING." (She was empathic when she wanted to be) I rise, look at life, and I realize although Jana now lives in my heart, I still live on this earth. When I do anything in kindness, love, or care, it's not just me; it's Jana and me looking at a small piece of life that before she died, we never thought to embrace.

I'm not standing upright; being the person I was before Jana's death. Some days, I fall again: hearing a familiar hymn at church (my pastor takes

no offence when I walk out); seeing animal images in the clouds—a game we played: smelling Starbucks coffee. Now, those times bring sadness, yet comfort. For I know Jana encircles me and rests in my heart. Finding strength in that sense, I rise slowly, I stand again. After each fall, I stand a little longer.

My son Jonathan has a quote for every occasion. Recently, as we talked, we shared the absence we felt in our lives with Jana's death. I told him that at times I experience a great fall again. His reply came quickly. "Well, Mom, if you're going to fall, fall forward." As I left him that afternoon, his words remained in my head. They continued to echo. I realized that although the reality of Jana's death continues, I don't fall into the dark abyss as I once did. I can stand. Sometimes I fall. But when I do fall, I fall forward.

--Rebecca Pinker, Jana's Mom

Introduction to Rebecca's latest book *"Falling Forward"*

The Dreaded Holidays

The holidays are coming, and there are some things we can do to make it easier to bear. If you are still in that robotic stage of grief, you may not even remember to flip the page of the calendar. People talk about the upcoming holidays and you feel "so what, my child is dead". Don't they understand? Can't they realize you don't feel thankful for anything, yet alone look forward to a Thanksgiving dinner?

If it is the first Thanksgiving without your child, give yourself permission to do nothing or as much as you feel comfortable with. As a bereaved parent we often feel we "ought" to do the traditional thing. That is fine if you have enough energy, but right now don't spend the little bit you have by doing anything that isn't really necessary.

For a bereaved family, the first set of holidays to be faced without their child is especially confusing. Nothing you do will feel normal. You haven't experienced ways to face holidays without your child. It is a trial and error matter as we experiment with new ways to observe holidays without our child here. Try to do what you feel you can do. If it doesn't work, don't feel afraid to try something different. Each time you make the effort, each time you try to do something, you learn from it. This whole grief thing is new, we haven't mastered it yet. Give yourself a break, don't put unrealistic expectations on yourself or others.

If it has been awhile, and you feel the need to resume the festivities again, by all means, do so. The dreams of a lifetime died when you child died. If you have managed to overcome the pain and suffering, the terrible doubts, the "if only's", rejoice in the fact you can see hope and a brighter future again. Celebrate and return to those things you once treasured.

Whatever you do this holiday season, remember, start early, allow yourself plenty of extra time and keep the stress down as much as possible. Accomplishing small steps gives you the courage to tackle bigger ones. Don't put too much emphasis on doing what others want. As long as you take care of yourself and try to get through things as best as you can, you will have done enough. When ever it all seems like too much, remember, The Compassionate Friends will be here and available to help however we can.

--Lynn Vines TCF South Bay/LA, CA

A Thanksgiving Prayer

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving
That my grief is not so new.
Last year it was so painful
To think of losing you.
Death can't claim my love for you
Though we are far apart.
Sweet memories will always be
Engraved upon my heart.
Time can never bring you back,
But it can help me be
Thankful for the years of joy
You brought our family.
To all parents with grief so new,
I share your loss and sorrow.
I pray you find with faith and time
The blessing of each tomorrow.
--Charlotte Irick TCF Idaho Falls, ID



Death Chose Him Posted on March 14th, 2020

I have struggled with a question for many months now. Was Tom mentally ill, or did he just decide he could no longer go on? Is mental illness a label we put on someone who dies by suicide to lessen the blow of the loss and make it more palatable for those left behind?

If Tom chose suicide to escape this world, then I as a parent must have failed him somehow, and

his death is a conviction of my failures making it doubly hard to accept. But if I can label it as him suffering from undiagnosed depression and known, but untreated, anxiety, that softens the blow a little. I can say he was not willing or able to ask for help overcoming his internal struggles, and that, although still hard to swallow, shifts the blame, at least partly, from me to him. Somehow, that makes it a little easier.

Some people say those who die by suicide choose death over life, take the easy way out, or are selfish. Those words cut into my heart, because I do not consider Tom to be a quitter, not up to a challenge, or someone to put his needs before others'. Although he was cynical and loved sarcasm, he also was generous with his words and deeds. He chose his friends carefully, but once screened into the tribe, they could count on him. He gave thoughtful gifts. He helped family members, teachers, and friends in selfless ways. I have heard many stories of his simple, thoughtful acts – helping put up chairs at the end of a class period, inviting bullied strangers to join him for lunch, buying a friend a pop and sitting under a tree talking. Tom was a good kid. Imperfect, but aren't we all?

I cannot imagine Tom would choose to execute his final act willingly, knowing the lasting devastation it would cause. The Tom I knew and loved would not have left his lifeless body to be found by those who loved him the most. He would not have abandoned family and friends forever anguished by his absence. He would not have wanted us to suffer in his death as he did in life. He would have thought through the ramifications of his actions. My Tom would not have chosen death; therefore, I must believe mental illness changed him and allowed death to choose him.

-- Kimberly Starr

Unbroken Dreams

I grew up believing in dreams. As a child, my dream was to some day have children. I remember looking into the night sky and believing angels were watching over my unborn babies until it was time for them to become a part of my life. Years later, when I first learned I was going to have a baby, I wanted to stop strangers on the street and tell them. I was absolutely filled with love.

I was in disbelief when months later my baby boy died soon after his birth. I felt the first crack in my



dream, and thought my twenty-five-year-old heart would break. The love which had filled my heart so completely had suddenly turned into emptiness, and I was touched with the reality that life is too brief and fragile.

My second little boy was born the next year, also prematurely, and like his brother before him, he lived only a short time. It was a different place, a different time, but the same deep heartache and darkness returned to my world. A part of me had died with each of these babies, and there were no words to explain how I felt. I kept my heart closed, my feelings unshared, and my silent hurt buried deep inside.

I had not yet learned that from every loss there is something gained. Living through the loss of a child can lead us to a deeper knowledge of life's gifts, and a kind of strength we never knew we had. The time came when I could no longer dwell on questions which had no answers, and I searched for insight and a right of passage to change my focus toward positive memories and feelings. My healing began when I realized I could not have felt this sadness about losing my babies unless I had first been blessed with the joy of loving and wanting them. The real emptiness in my heart would have been never having had them at all.

As I worked through my grief, I was beginning to learn some of life's lessons. The pain of losing someone we love, especially a child, never really leaves us, for it is a part of our lives that will always be unfinished and unexplained. It's never easy to accept the unfairness of life, and yet it touches us all. And sometimes, only because life has touched us in this way, do we become more aware of its wonder and the pure blessing life gives us.

I came to understand that each time I had allowed myself to love, it meant taking a risk. And each time I had reached for a dream also meant taking a risk. I knew the only way I could live life fully was to let go of the emptiness and become unafraid to risk again. I promised myself that I would let love back into my heart, for it is much too precious a gift to waste, and my days and nights too precious to be covered with sadness. I began to cherish life even more.

My third baby son was born the next year, and two years later, my baby daughter. Both again premature, but thanks to God, a wonderfully dedicated pediatrician, and advanced medical technology, they survived. Their hospital stays were long and filled with frightening moments, but in spite

of the odds that faced them, they clung tightly to life. Months later when they came home, I slowly found I was mending my broken dreams with the love I was giving to them. And I was beginning a new dream.

Many years have passed, yet the thought of unfairness still comes, and I still feel my tears when I think of my first two babies, or when I hear of precious children being abused and neglected. This is when I remember the lessons I have learned and, instead of dwelling on loss, I strive to embrace the hope I know is real. I now give my love and support to organizations that dedicate themselves to the lives of children and to mending their broken dreams. Giving of myself is the only way I can ever give back the blessings life has given me. We all have something to give, and it is through this act of giving and risking to love again, that we ultimately find a way to heal. Often we uncover sacred gifts of our own just by listening to others who are hurting, or by holding someone's hand and letting them know we care. Each of us has a story, and each of us feels alone with our heartache. Yet we are never truly alone when we let ourselves be unafraid to share our feelings, and to give what is in our hearts. Sharing connects us and makes us realize how much people need one another in this world.

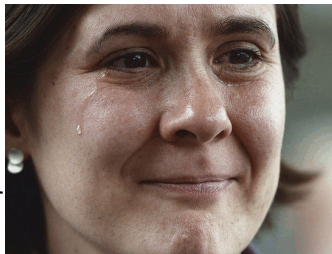
I still look up into the night sky sometimes and think about those two little boys that were with me for such a short while. And sometimes I find myself wondering what they would be like today if they could have grown up with their brother and sister. Then I remember that although they are with the angels, in some wonderful way they are still with me — because love never dies. It is the strength we carry with us forever.

--Written by Flavia Weedn copyright Weedn Family Trust
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Seasoned Greivers...

A Grief Shared – Phase II

By Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead.
Written on the 15th anniversary of her daughter Maria Victoria Boucugnani's angel date – September 13, 2011.



Smile, though your heart is aching...

It has been 15 years. No – it is not possible – it couldn't be – it was yesterday or at the most a couple of years ago. A few years after my daughter, Maria-Victoria died, I wrote an article entitled “A Grief Shared” in which I was trying to let

professionals and others know what is helpful and what is not for those of us who have lost a child.

Now at 15 years, I thought it might be time to revisit “A Grief Shared” from the perspective of someone further down the path. It is harder to write this than the first one. I don't know why, other than perhaps the accumulation of years of grief and “missingness” have eroded my stamina. But I still want to write it. Remember, it is just one person's perspective; maybe some things will resonate with others, maybe not.

Time – time goes by so quickly. Everything is in terms of before and after. The before is the refuge where smiles can come from. Those treasured little glimpses of the way we were. When I feel them, I am truly happy. But most of life is lived in the after. Smile, even though it's breaking... The first few years in the after were survival boot camp. You don't really know if you can survive – you can't imagine it – you're not sure you want to. You make your decision – you plow through the after. It's not dark – but it's very cloudy – a thick fog – obscuring the future you don't want to see anyway. If you are lucky enough to have friends and support, you are able to travel a little steadier. In the early months of the after, you cannot imagine ever laughing again. You will find that after you are able to do so, you have reached a very important milestone.

When there are clouds in the sky, you'll get by...
“You'll get by” is a good phrase for those of us who have experienced this loss. For a long time that is about all you are hoping to do – “get by.” I had – and still have – an overwhelming fear of literally being suffocated by my own grief and sad-shock; that it will utterly take everything out of me and leave me with nothingness. Sad – shock is the combination of the realization that this has really happened, followed by the overwhelming sadness that accompanies that realization. You learn these little tricks to keep this monster at bay. I will allow myself to sink into the abyss for only a very short period of time and then rapidly climb out – or I take a detour – consciously – if I'm getting too close to the edge.

What has helped me the most – and is a very personal thing that I seldom share with others – is the way I keep my daughter present with me every day (although I know she probably has better, more important things to do). Maria Victoria's presence permeates my home. There are pictures everywhere. I can talk to her, tell her I love her and have framed notes from her telling me she loves me

too. We refer to the guest bedroom in our house as Maria Victoria's room, since when we moved about a year after the accident, we decorated it the way she had wanted in our old home. With every trip we take we are accompanied by Patrick, her stuffed dog, so that she always sees the sights with us. I wear an angel pin every day whenever I leave the house so she is with me. I have done this for 15 years.

Over the years I've had awesome, incredible spiritual experiences that have assured me and my soul that my daughter is still my daughter, that her spirit, her consciousness survives. It is so hard to try to explain this to people. It is incredibly important to me – such a part of who I am, that I can't bear to listen to the naysayers or, worse, those who outright chastise me for believing in such things as a scientist.

Yes, I am a scientist and I have devoted a lot of time and research to the scientific study of survival of consciousness. Not to mention that I've experienced wondrous things. We who have reluctantly joined the group of bereaved parents, Compassionate Friends, probably know more about this than anyone on the planet.

If you smile through your fear and sorrow...

You do learn to laugh and smile again. You are a changed person – after all, you live in the after. With all this elapsed time, how do I describe what it feels like? The one thing that stands out the most is that I have no fear of death. This has continued from the earlier – after years. I'm not in a hurry – I still want to enjoy life, try to have fun, do meaningful work, make a difference and treasure my family – but I'm not afraid to die. This is very freeing and has allowed me to chart my own path. As I said in my earlier article, death is the door to where my daughter is. I view it as a great adventure with the ultimate joy of reuniting with Maria Victoria.

I am a more "take it or leave it" kind of person now. I guess those of us who have traveled this journey have a clearer vision of what's important and what is not. I don't need to convince anybody of anything. I've become more tolerant and less tolerant. More tolerant of different points of view but less tolerant of narrow-mindedness, silliness or arrogance.

Smile and maybe tomorrow...

I do fall into the chasm of "what might have been." Usually it's when I'm feeling sorry for myself and missing the love my daughter could be physically giving me at this time and the additional

grandchildren who would be a part of my life. I miss the best friend I know she would have been. That hurts – so I don't stay there that long. I miss most her adorable face, her big eyes looking straight into mine, the feel of her skin on my hands, her tenderness, our bond. Thinking of her and visualizing her – that helps.

If I was asked, "What do you think is the biggest misconception of people who do not live in the "after" have about those who do?" I would say this, "They cannot understand how we live with this so present in our lives every day even after 15 years." As I said before, 15 years is impossible. You live every day with both the joy of having had your child with you for a time and the grief of not having your child. I truly believe that most people think we have "moved on" or something like that. Nope – that doesn't happen. Every day in the after we feel for our child. Fifteen years is 5,475 days. I can't put into words what 5,475 days has done to my body and mind. It has definitely caused erosion, a deep canyon. My soul, however, is enhanced, open and full.

You'll find that life is still worthwhile, if you just smile. Our continuing journey is to make life worthwhile, without the physical presence of our child. Defining "worthwhile" is up to the individual person. I feel that if you have something to believe in, if hope is a big part of your life, if you are able to honor your child and find meaning in your contribution to this Earth, you have a worthwhile life. So smile through your tears and sorrow, dare to laugh, dare to dream, and let your child's love embrace you.

--Lynda Boucugnani-Whitehead. TCF Atlanta, Georgia, September 2011

Newly Bereaved...

Sometimes

Sometimes in the middle of the night as I read, wash dishes, fold clothes, or sit quietly and pontificate about this or that, I hear your voice. The sound is so clear. "Mom," you say. Sometimes I answer back in an automatic response. I wait for a brief moment and then your voice is gone. I am startled and I freeze in place, not moving, not breathing, not blinking, just listening.

Sometimes I think I see you in a store or on the street, walking that unique walk that was yours alone. I look twice and realize it is not you. But it



was a brief moment of joy to see that special walk. Sometimes I think I have lost my mind. But most of the time I am thankful for these little reminders. Perhaps it is my mind giving me a sense of you. Perhaps the keeping of you in my heart brings this peace to me.

Sometimes when I come home from work, I find something on the counter that wasn't there that morning. A sock, a small socket wrench, a matchbox car. I ask my husband if he came home during the day. He didn't, of course. I wonder about these things, but then I also get comfort from them.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to you just one more time. I would simply listen to your voice, your excitement, your disappointment, your happiness, your enthusiasm, your concern....whatever you might be feeling. That would be enough. I don't need great revelations, just a conversation, just your voice.

Sometimes I could just scream at the inequity of your death. You, my only child, the one who gave purpose and meaning to my life, are gone forever from this plane. But then, I get a grip on my sanity and stop thinking negatively.

Sometimes I meet a newly bereaved mother and I see myself. I know her heart, I understand her torment, and I feel the pain that has wrapped her in its horrible, crushing grip. I listen to this mother whose world has been gnarled into a grotesque shell of life, and I ask about her child.

Sometimes I accept my reality, sometimes I don't. But I always keep you in my heart, taking you into the future as far as I, myself, will go. And that has to be enough. I cannot change the past. I can only live today and plan for tomorrow.

Sometimes, though, I am glad that my mind allows me these little forays into a parallel reality. These give me peace. In this world, peace is as ethereal as a fine mist near a waterfall. Sometimes, reality is just too harsh.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF, Katy, TX

For Friends and Family...

My Wish List



I wish you would not be afraid to speak my loved one's name. They lived and were important and I need to hear their name. If I cry and get emotional if we talk about my loved one, I wish you knew that it isn't because you hurt me: the fact that they died causes my tears. You have allowed me to cry and I

thank you. Crying and emotional outbursts are healing. I will have emotional highs and lows, ups and downs. I wish you wouldn't think that if I have a good cry my grief is all over, or that if I have a bad day I need psychiatric counseling.

Being bereaved is not contagious, so I wish you wouldn't stay away from me. I wish you knew all the "crazy" grief reactions that I am having are in fact very normal. Depression, anger, fear, hopelessness and a questioning of values and beliefs are to be expected following a death.

I wish you wouldn't expect my grief to be over in 6 months. The first few years are going to be exceedingly traumatic for me. As with alcoholics, I will never be "cured" or a "formerly bereaved", but forevermore be recovering from my bereavement.

I wish you understood the physical reaction to grief. I may gain weight, lose weight, sleep all the time or not at all, develop a host of illnesses and be accident prone, all of which are related to my grief.

Our loved one's birthday, the anniversary of their death and the holidays can be terrible times for us. I wish you could tell us that you are thinking of us and them on these days. And if we get quiet and withdrawn, just know that we are thinking about them and don't try to coerce us into being cheerful.

I wish you wouldn't offer to take me out for a drink, or to a party, this is a temporary crutch and the only way I can get through this grief is to experience it. I have to hurt before I can heal.

I wish you understood that grief changes people. I am not the same person I was before my beloved died and I will never be that person again. If you keep waiting for me to "get back to my old self" you will stay frustrated. I am a new creature with new thoughts, dreams, aspirations, values and beliefs. Please try to get to know this different me — I'm the one who'll be here from now on.

--Author unknown TCF Valley of the Sun website

Welcome...



The South Bay/L.A. Chapter of TCF wants to help you in your grief. Being surrounded by other bereaved parents who can offer advice and show that it is possible to survive the pain of losing a child, is helpful to many. We invite you to join us at the next meeting via Zoom, or at a mini-meeting lunch held every Friday at 1 at Hoff's Hut in the outdoor patio area (237th & Crenshaw, Torrance).

Helpful Hint...

What Do I Do With My Child's Things?

This is a problem that faces all bereaved parents. We discuss it from time to time at our meetings. Some of us keep the child's room just as it was before the death. We don't want anything touched or removed. Some find solace in giving things away to close friends or relatives. Knowing someone we love is wearing our child's clothes, or playing with his or her toys, brings us comfort. Some of us find we can deal with only a few items at a time; clothes, one month; books another; perhaps toys, a few months later.

Some of us find that, as time goes on and we would have gotten rid of the things anyway, it becomes easier. For instance, after awhile we realize that if the child were still alive, he or she would have outgrown clothes. Then it's easier to give them away.

Or your child would have graduated from college this year, and therefore would no longer use the study desk or clock radio. We can give these things away in the normal time sequence.

The important thing is not to let others rush us into doing something before we are ready and not to let ourselves feel guilty about the amount of time it takes us to make a decision. When the time is right, and the decision is right for us, we'll know what to do.

--TCF, Honolulu, Hawaii

Book in Review...



Dear Parents: *Letters to Bereaved Parents.* A support group in book form. Parents and others say what they would tell a grieving parent. Friends walk with you and let you know you are not alone. Available online at www.centering.org or you local bookstore.

Aftermath

No amount of make-up can ever hide
The fact I'm crying - deep inside.
The pain is mirrored in my eyes
A child's death - ultimate sacrifice.
A mother's heart is this way broken,
A fleeting smile is just a token
Of a spirit that's badly battered,
One whose dreams were lately shattered,
Because a future's been denied

To the son I carried - inside.
Why? What if? If only? How?
Questions little matter now.
Suffice to say the death took place,
But pain and suffering can't erase
The memories, within my heart
Of which my child's so much a part.
Wishes may no longer come true,
Skies seem dark and grey, not blue.
Yet I know, once more,
I'll rise up above these darkened skies,
Face the world again with laughter,
Happiness will follow - after.
Hopefully, time's healing power
Will help efface each sudden shower
Of grief, now preventing me each day
From treading lightly on life's highway.
I need much strength and inner power
To cope with every waking hour.
But many others have felt this way,
Endured such pain as I feel today.
With thoughts and prayers from other minds
I know that I, too, will become resigned.
I'll accept the fact that my child is dead
Looking back won't do...
I'll look ahead.

--Mair MacDonald, TCF/Regina, SK
In memory of Kerys Ian MacDonald

Precious Child Remembered

We know that you are hurting
We know just how you feel.
The pain deep inside your heart
You feel it can't be real.
We know what's going through your mind,
Thoughts that cloud it through the day.
We're on the road you're traveling now.
It can be handled, there's a way.
Don't fight the tears you're feeling,
You must just let them flow.
Speak of your child daily
To many people that you know.
Find others who can understand
They'll hold you as you cry.
The questions, we have all asked,
All the how's and every why.
We will always think of our child,
No one will have to say a word.
They will remain in our hearts
Our precious child remembered.
--author Unknown



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

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 Triliegi &
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jonathan David Streisand
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13
Parents: Pricilla & David
Streisand

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

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

Quvia (Cody) Samuel
Born: 4/74 Died: 11/18
Parents: Vincent & Betty
Samuel

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



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

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

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

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

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

* 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



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

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

Sorry, no birthday tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...



Not The Same

He was a very nice man, like so many others, and yet he was so different.

His quick smile and gentle ways were like those of others and yet, he was so uncommon.

He was kind and loving with unshakable faith like others, and yet he was so unique.

He was a dutiful soldier who gave his life like many others, and yet he was so special.

The same as others? No

Not to those who knew and loved him.

He was himself, and individual, and he was my brother!

--Pam Miller Farrell TCF Evansville, IL

A Sibling's Feelings

The pain of a sibling is so real we sometimes hide it deep inside of ourselves. As we watch our parents hurting we see the pain in their eyes. We are also hurting not only for the loss of our brother or sister but also for our own parents. We need to reach out to each other to let each other know we are hurting inside.

Our lives have all changed forever. I know they lost a son but I lost my younger brother I loved, and as siblings we share a special bond that we'll never have anymore for he no longer lives ... my brother, my friend.

I will always miss you and I will never forget you for you will always live in my heart, and I have wonderful memories no one can ever take away from me. In my heart you will stay, love you

forever.

--Marie Porreca TCF Rockland County, NY

Ask Dr. Paulson Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone. These excerpts were reprinted from the September and October 2011 E-Newsletter of The Compassionate Friends.

Q. As the autumn season approaches, I cringe. I used to love autumn before my brother died. It was my favorite season. Now, I'm afraid it will haunt me forever. Every time I think about it, I wish it would just pass me by. Is there anything I can do?

A. You are not alone. For everyone who has lost a loved one, there are things that trigger painful memories. The good news is that as time wears on the pain subsides, and the painful memories surrounding your loss begin to be outnumbered by the happy memories of the love and laughter you shared. These are things that will help in the long run, but in the short run you may have to try to do some very specific things to help ease the pain. In your situation it is an entire season that triggers the painful memories and feelings. It might be helpful if you plan something to look forward to during the fall season, especially if it could be something that would help you remember your brother. This could be a way of keeping him a part of your life in a special way, with a specific time set aside each year. It would be especially important that you focus on ways of celebrating your brother and the life he lived.



For Grandparents...

Yes. Grandparents Do Grieve!

Thank God, someone stepped up and said, "Hey! This child was and is my grandchild! And I hurt too!" Not looking for sympathy, but wanting the world to know that yes, the mother and father are hurting from the loss of their little angels, but Grandma and Grandpa loved these children with their hearts and souls. Totally unconditionally! I read these letters that are sent to me, every day. My heart hurts for these parents for the loss of their children. But, please, let us not forget any of the grandparents whose loss is twofold. One for their child who is hurting so badly and for the loss of their

grandchildren. I always thought my grandchildren would outlive me. At least that's the way it's supposed to be. It doesn't always work out that way. So yes, my heart also hurts for the grandparents too.
--Wanda Bryant



From Our Members...

Thanksgiving Thoughts

Thanksgiving Day is a day for giving thanks over and over; to repeat our thanks for the life our loved ones lived on earth; to recapitulate our thanks for all the good of all the years we lived with them even though we now live without them. Thanksgiving is a holiday, by definition a happy day. It is a family and friend holiday.

If it's our first Thanksgiving, or our second or third, with "one too few", we may resent the whole idea of being thankful. However, most of us are more than willing to talk about the ones we have lost, and if that's all we can manage, that's all we should try to manage.

How we grievers long on the special days to have our loved ones acknowledged. Their absence. Their presence. To have others listen as we share our memories of them. To listen as others share their memories. Well, that sad-glad sharing, too, is thanksgiving.

--*Making It Through the Toughest Days of Grief* by Meg Woodson Submitted by Linda Curtis

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

ZOOM... We will be holding our next Zoom meeting on Thursday, Nov 1st @ 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, or Leo at Liccia79@gmail.com. We hope to see you.

Welcome New Members ... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have

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



Birthday Table... In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share.

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



Newsletter Birthday Tributes... During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to Lynntcf@aol.com

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Nov. 1st for Dec. birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 530-3214 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



Get Your Photo Buttons... Photo buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at

monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, call Ken at (310) 544-6690. You can mail him a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and Ken can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. Each child is given a page in the book. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

Library Information... At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let Linda know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

Thank You ... Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. To make it easier for those who would rather donate online, just go to our website and use the donate button at www.tcfsbla.org. A receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter. For donations at the meetings, attach a tribute to your donation to be listed in the newsletter. (Just a Hint: If you plan to leave \$\$ at the TCF meeting, you might want to make it by check so you can receive an IRS deduction.) No amount is too small and donations are definitely needed to keep our chapter going.

Our Website... Joe Zelik is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get your newsletter online. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310)



530-3214 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at Lynntcf@aol.com if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA



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

- 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 3rd Wed.

Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.

Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269

Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206

Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.

Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160

San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.

South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue

Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.

Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

Local Support Groups...

Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

Alive Alone: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Livealone.org

Survivors of Suicide: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Terry Jordan, LCSW (301) 859-2241

Our House/Bereavement House: Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also **Spanish Support Group**, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.

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

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

Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place: Various bereavement support groups including

support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

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

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

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

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

Camp Comfort Zone: Year round Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (310) 483-8313. CCZ offers FREE one-day family programs, community programs, and 3-day weekend camps. All programming empowers children to grieve, heal, and grow in healthy ways. Our weekend camps provide children with the opportunity to break their isolation and realize they are not alone in a fun and healing environment. Grief evolves with each developmental stage a child reaches, so learning to manage grief in a healthy way is important at every age. Whether the child’s loss was ten years or three months ago, encourage them to attend – you may have an opportunity to change the course of their life.

Other Grief Support Websites...

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| thetearsfoundation.org |  | childloss.com |
| goodgriefresources.com | | griefwatch.dom |
| bereavedparentsusa.org | | opentohope.com |
| healingafterloss.org | | webhealing.com |
| survivorsofselfharm.com | | alivealone.org |
| taps.org (military death) | | angelmoms.com |
| save.org (suicide/depression) | | |
| pomc.com (families of murder victims) | | |
| graspshelp.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 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 |  | Lor 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. **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

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.

Unfortunately, no donations were received this month.

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

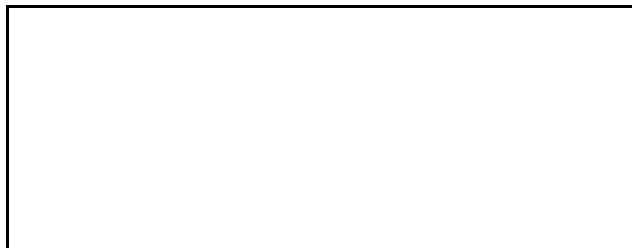
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*In memory of our loved ones
who are no longer with us this
Thanksgiving.
Always on our minds.
Forever in our hearts.*



November 2020

-Return Service Requested-



Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,
just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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