



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

February 2021 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

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.

"Tidbits On Grief: Things We Learn About Greiving The Loss On A Child" is the topic for the Feb. 4th **Virtual meeting 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 Liccica79@gmail.com

The TCF Sharing group is not meeting until dining restrictions are lifted.

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

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The Feb. 4th 7th Zoom meeting will start with **“Tidbits On Grief: Things We Learn About Grieving The Loss Of A Child”**. From the unimaginable pain that we think we can't bear to the sometimes humorous but true life lessons, grief teaches us. We transform from grief in a thousand different ways. In the beginning we question everything, we think we are going crazy from the onslaught of pain and emotions we can't control. We just want our child back... we want our “Normal” life back. Once we internalize that isn't going to happen, we embark on a journey towards finding ways to cope with our loss. Combining things we wish someone had told us about grief before we lost our children, to things we have already learned after their deaths, this month's topic contains highlights of some of the things we learn as we stumble our way through grief. Looking back, I can now see myself in almost all of the things listed. Even if they don't apply to you now, they probably will in the future. Take the time to think about each of them as you read through the insights gathered from both TCF members further down the road and the wonderful blog; www.whatsyourgrief.com

Please join us on Thurs. Feb 4th at 7 PM on Zoom and share your thoughts about these “tidbits on grief”.

64 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Grief

(If it's in quotes, it is something one of our readers shared with us.)



1. No matter how prepared you think you are for a death, you can never be fully prepared for the loss and the grief.
2. You can plan for death, but death does not always comply with our wishes or plans.
3. “Stop avoiding and be present”.
4. “Dying is not like you see on TV or in the movies. It is not peaceful or prepared. You may not have a spiritual or meaningful moment . . . It's too real”.
5. A hospital death is not always a bad death.
6. A home death/hospice death is not always a good death.
7. “There will be pressure from others to move on, even minutes or hours after a death, and this can lead to regrets”.
8. “Death is not an emergency – there is always time to step back and take a moment to say goodbye”
9. Death and grief make people uncomfortable, so be prepared for awkward encounters.

10. You will plan the funeral while in a haze. If you aren't happy with the funeral you had, have another memorial service later.
11. When people offer support, take them up on it.
12. People will bring you food because they don't know what else to do. Don't feel bad throwing it away.
13. People will say stupid, hurtful things without even realizing it.
14. People will tell you things that aren't true about your grief.
15. Death brings out the best and the worst in families, so be prepared.
16. There is no such thing as closure.
17. There is no timeline for grieving. You can't rush it. You will grieve, in some form, forever.
18. “There will always be regrets. No matter how much time you had, you'll always want more”.
19. Guilt is a normal part of grief.
20. Anger is normal part of grief.
21. “The pain of a loss is a reflection of love, but you never regret loving as hard as you can”.
22. Grief can make you question your faith.
23. “Grief doesn't come in 5 neat stages. Grief is messy and confusing”.
24. Grief makes you feel like you are going crazy.
25. Grief can make you question your life, your purpose, and your goals. And that isn't always a bad thing.
26. We all grieve differently, which can create strain and confusion between family members and friends.
27. “However badly you think it is going to hurt, it is going to be a million times worse”.
28. You may find comfort in very unexpected places.
29. “You should go somewhere to debrief after caregiving”.
30. “The last 24 hours of their lives will replay in your mind”.
31. Trying to protect children from death and the emotions of grief isn't helpful.
32. “It's sometimes necessary to seek out new ways to grieve on your own, find new guidance if the people who are supposed to be supportive simply haven't learned how”.
33. “You grieve your past, present, and future with that person”.
34. Big life events and milestones will forever be bittersweet.
35. Grief triggers are everywhere – you will see things that remind you of your loved one all over the place, and it may lead to sudden outbursts of

emotion.

36. "You lose yourself, your identity, meaning, purpose, values, your trust".

37. Holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays will be hard forever.

38. People will tell you what you should and shouldn't feel and how you should and shouldn't grieve. Ignore them.

39. "The grief process is about not only mourning the loss, but getting to know yourself as a different person".

40. There is no normal when it comes to grieving.

41. Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.

42. "It is normal to feel numb after it happens. The tears will come. They come in waves".

43. Grief can make you feel selfish and entitled, and that's okay (at least for a while).

44. Meeting new people, who never knew the person who died, can be hard and sad. But eventually it can be nice to "introduce" them through stories and photographs.

45. The practice of sending thank you notes after a funeral is a cruel and unusual tradition.

46. "People love to judge how you are doing. Watch out for those people".

47. You can't compare grief or compare losses, though people will try.

48. Any loss you grieve is a valid loss, though people will sometimes make you feel otherwise.

49. "Just because you feel pretty good one day it doesn't mean you are cured of your grief".

50. There are many days when you will feel totally and completely alone, whether you are or not.

51. Grief can make you do stupid, crazy things.

They may be what you need at the time, but you may regret them later. Cut yourself some slack.

52. Grief can make you a stronger person than you were before.

53. Grief counseling doesn't mean you're crazy or weak.

54. It is okay to cry sometimes.

55. It is okay NOT to cry sometimes.

56. "Time does NOT heal all wounds".

57. "Grief re-writes your address book". Sometimes the people you think will be there for you are not. People you never expect become your biggest supporters.

58. "You don't get over it, you just get used to it".

59. It is okay to tell people when they are not being helpful.

60. Watch your drinking— alcohol can quickly become an unhealthy friend.

61. You will have to face your emotions eventually – you can avoid them for a while, but they will catch up with you in the end.

62. Talking isn't the only way to express and process emotions.

63. You will never go back to being your "old self". Grief changes you and you are never the same.

64. Nothing you do in the future will change your love for the person who died. Eventually, you will begin to enjoy life again, date again, have another child, seek new experiences, or whatever. None of these things will diminish your love for the person you lost.

--what'syourgrief.com

(From TCF members)

- I will never be the same person I was before my child died, and that's okay.
- You can't predict how you will feel tomorrow or even an hour from now.
- If you have a good moment, for whatever reason, recognize it and claim it.
- The first time I laughed out loud after my daughter died, it scared the hell out of me.
- You can laugh and cry at the same time.
- You can leave the house without makeup, and nobody cares.
- The numbness wears off and it gets worse before it gets better.
- Dogs, babies, and parents know unconditional love.
- Grieving is exhausting.
- I will not apologize for hurting.
- Real friends are few and far between.
- It's okay to smile. It doesn't make you a bad mother.
- It is okay to ask for help.
- It is okay to say, "I am not okay."
- You can never have enough pictures of the ones you love.
- Friends who love and support you even when you are emotional, irrational, unreasonable, and angry are the greatest gifts in life.
- The depth of love is not determined by blood ties.
- I will heal from this and in doing so, I am not leaving Fay behind.
- Man (or woman!) can live on cereal alone.
- Pajamas are really a very wonderful invention.
- I did the very best I could possibly do for Fay.
- I cannot wait to take care of myself physically until I feel better emotionally.



- Everyone will not understand the depth of my loss, but it sure helps to feel less alone when a select few feel it and weep with me.
- It is okay to cry and in fact in doing so, some of my pain is released.
- There is no good way to lose someone ... it all hurts like hell.
- You can't cry till your heart explodes, but it will feel like it.
- No, the fact that I can have OTHER children does not "make it all better".
- I am not alone.
- People say stupid things.
- That I could have fun again.
- That life can be good again.
- What is trivial.
- All the good toys come out when you can't buy them for your child.
- Mail can still come for your child, even if you never lived at that address or the fact that your child has been dead for years.
- There are people with more problems and more pain.
- Grace is a choice. I can choose to accept it and I can choose to give it. The same goes for other people.
- People have no sense of mercy: Most don't care what you have been through, they think they have been through worse.
- Someone who will cry with you is worth their weight in gold.
- Remember that there is nothing you can do to make a person's grief go away. There is nothing that you can say that will make it better. Please don't even try. Just be there.
- That Nathan was more popular and liked than he thought he was.
- Even if you do rotate the pictures on the wall, he won't grow any bigger like the rest of your children.
- That no matter how protective you have been, there are just some things you can't save them from.
- That it is OK to say, No!
- That just because some one says they are "Fine" doesn't really mean they are.
- That just because someone is smiling, doesn't mean they are happy...
- That keeping your feelings bottled up doesn't help you in your grief journey.
- That it's OK to keep your child's room as it is for as long as you want or need to.
- That everyone grieves differently.



- That it wasn't necessary for me to go to the grave-site like so many do and that it was ok to not do so.
- That when you do finally do something different with your child's room, doesn't mean you are denying his existence.
- That some things aren't worth getting uptight about.
- To enjoy the little things more fully.
- That Life is Not Fair!
- That it's important to tell people that you love them and care about them.
- That just cause I think of something crazy, doesn't mean I AM crazy!
- That its easy to misjudge my surviving child's grief.
- That my surviving child grieves differently than me.
- That it's life as usual for my surviving child mixed with the grief they try to bury.
- That anticipation of The Day is usually harder than The Day itself.
- That little memories out of the blue when I least expected it, make me cry.
- That talking to my husband about our son is like talking to a brick wall.
- That forgiving family of their offenses is a good thing.
- That people are VERY clueless when it comes to a death.
- That people really do mean the best when they say stupid things, it's all they know.
- That I was once a Clueless Person too.
- That it's good not to make any rash decisions in the first year.
- That every moment really matters.
- The importance of support and encouragement, giving it and receiving it.
- To take one day at a time.
- I would be lost in the abyss without my support group.
- How much I need others who have been there.
- That my heart sings with joy every time I hear his name.
- That it doesn't matter how our children died, just that they have.
- That to lose your child is the ultimate tragedy.
- To live my life, rather than live my son's death.
- Lastly (though I am sure there are many more) --- I HAVE LEARNED: A New Norm
- --TCF meetings

On Picking Up the Pieces

A few months after my son died someone said to me she was glad to see I was "picking up the pieces and going on". Well, I was picking up the pieces all right, but what she didn't know was they were almost a whole set of new pieces. I haven't been able to go on as though nothing about me has changed since my child died. I'm a different me now and I am still learning how the new me reacts to old situations. I have found the new pieces don't exactly fit together all nice and neat like a jigsaw puzzle because some of the old pieces are hanging in there and they don't quite mesh with the newer ones. I am and have been in the process of grinding off the edges, hoping for a better fit, one I could live with more comfortably. Time, patience and hard work are helping me accomplish this.

How are the rough edges on your new pieces coming along?

--Mary Cleckley

Tears are Hot

I never really noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. Sure I have cried many times before you died; but you leaving made time stand still and life feel so surreal.

Shock, numbness, nausea, and pain so severe I was certain I would die. Can't they see it? Surely they can. No one acts as if they can see it. My heart hurts so badly, my soul aches; my breasts hurt yearning for my children, how can that be? Why can't they see it? Why can't they help? Who am I now that my children have gone? Where am I now that your voices are nowhere to be heard?

There are no phone calls with crisis to fix. No more reasons to give you money today. No problems that only Mom knows the answers to.

It's been a year now since you went home, and I find myself feeling so alone. Who will care for me when I am old? What of my future? Where have my dreams gone, your college graduations, your careers, your weddings, the holidays at your homes?

Since you left I struggle with so many questions. Am I still a Mom? I have no children now, so how could I possibly be a Mom? What if I had bought four new tires for the car instead of two? What if I had not given you gas money to take the trip?

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry for missing you both as I

often do, the tears fall in slow motion symbolic of how today it's still so unreal.

It seems like yesterday I received that dreaded call; I hate to have to tell you this, he said on the phone. At that moment I knew what I was about to hear would change my life forever. I knew what he was about to say, I could not bear.

But for some reason I did not know you were dead; I thought mothers were to know those things, a feeling, a hunch. I had so much guilt that I didn't know my babies had died when I was in that meeting at 10:30 that day.

My first thought when I heard his voice was that you made him call because your daughter/niece "our baby girl" had died and you could not tell me yourself for your broken hearts and your personal shock. But then I heard those dreaded words that I will never forget the gist...Amanda and Logan have been killed in an accident, or maybe he said, Amanda and Logan are dead, or possibly even, there has been an accident and Amanda and Logan didn't make it, I don't recall but the end result was all the same.

I never noticed how hot tears are as they roll down my face. As I cry today a year later, I cry more for me and our little girl not having you in our lives for I know you are home now and we will be together again one day.

I thank you for leaving your baby girl here with me; I thank God daily she was in the car behind you. We have each other and we will make it through and create a new life together as you meant us to. Caring for her has helped me to heal that part of me that asked if I am still a Mom. My answer today is yes, I am a Mom of three, two of my children live in heaven and I have one precious little girl who lives here with me.

The year has gone so fast; I can't believe I write this now a year later and in some ways I feel no different. The pain is still immense; my heart still hurts, my soul still aches, the physical pain still remains. But the difference is today I have seen the other side; I have experienced joy where last year I knew I never would again, I have laughed and smiled and played as we used to do. I strive daily to go on in your memory, with your love as my inspiration as you would want me to.

Some days I even forget to notice the temperature of the tears as they fall down my face, for once more they are healing tears, tears of joy, tears of anger and tears of sadness, they are not only the tears of a Mother's broken heart.

--Deana L. Martin, In Memory of my children,
Amanda Suzanne Mills and Logan Robert Mills



“SIGNS”

Posted on July 30th, 2019

Do any of you believe in signs or messages from your deceased child? I do, and it helps me with the grieving process and to overcome tough days, like her birthday.

Every time I see a penny that shouldn't be there or wasn't there the last time I looked, I think of it as the presence of Samantha. I could be having any type of day – good, bad, indifferent – and when I see a misplaced penny, I instantly sense a presence of her and say to myself “Samantha is thinking of me”. I know this might sound crazy, but it makes me feel happy to believe that she's thinking of her dad and wants to let me know that.

The most impactful penny sighting happened on Samantha's birthday – April 25, 2018. My birthday is on April 27th. Samantha would have been 14 in 2019. (She died in 2006 at the age of 17 months.) I was walking into work, and feeling absolutely horrible. Her birthday and death day are terrible triggers for me, and I was depressed and feeling a very heavy sense of grief that day. As I approached my desk, I saw a penny on my chair. In my 17 years of working at my company, I've never seen a penny on my chair, so this sighting was completely unexpected and a total shock. It wasn't there last night when I left work for the day. I asked around and nobody claimed putting the penny there.

I immediately called my wife and said “You're not going to believe what's on my chair! A penny and it wasn't there when I left work last night.” She said “What date is on the penny?” I picked it up, looked closely at the date, and couldn't believe my eyes that the date was 2006, the year she died.

I knew Samantha was thinking of me and telling me that she was OK and that I should not be sad. I instantly went from deep longing and sadness to euphoric. It was the best birthday present I've received in the 13 years since Samantha has passed away.

We all know that the grieving process is unique and personal. Some might believe in signs. Others may not. The bottom line is that if it's signs or looking at photos or visiting the grave site that gives you moments of happiness, then embrace it. I did and it's turned some pretty painful days into a positive.

–Jonathan Baer

Groundhog Day

According to folklore, every year on this day, a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil, in a little town by the same name in Pennsylvania, wakes from his winter slumber, rises from his cozy little burrow and gazes about at his surroundings. Legend has it that if he doesn't see his shadow, he shakes himself off and ventures out to welcome an early spring. If he sees his shadow, he becomes frightened and quickly retreats down his hole to safety where he goes back to sleep and the winter weather continues.

This year Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, thus predicting another six more weeks of winter. When we lose a child, we seem to linger in a perpetual winter. For a very long time we see our world as a barren winter landscape. The warmth and love that our children brought to our hearts has been ripped away by their death and we're left with a cold aching void. We are a little like Punxsutawney Phil. We might be afraid to come to our first Compassionate Friends meeting. We may want to hide from the world and stay in our burrows. But if we are very brave and come to a meeting, we will meet others who have survived the long cold winter of their hearts. We gather to share our stories, support each other, love each other and very slowly we begin to and rejoin life as best we can. Remember, we need not walk alone.
Janet G. Reyes Alamo Area TX



The month of February arrives with Valentines posted all over the store fronts, reminding us of the ones we love, and sometimes, of the ones we lost. As we send our wishes of love to our favorite Valentines, we want to also remember our sons,

daughters, grandchildren, brothers and sisters who have died. They are the Valentines who will remain forever in our hearts. We send our wishes of love to them everyday, in our thoughts, and in our hearts. Happy Valentine's Day, February 14th to the ones we hold most dear in our minds and hearts.

--Cathy H., TCF Algona, IA

There Is Hope After Loss

My nineteen-year-old son, Nick, died by suicide when he jumped from a bridge just outside his college campus. His body was lost for almost five weeks. The week prior to its retrieval, I received a call from a coroner who had misidentified another teen's body for my son's.

That boy and his girlfriend jumped just two weeks after Nick. Meanwhile, my family tried to remove two cruel videos posted online after the suicide— one making fun of Nick's death. Losing a child to suicide is horrific, and these events certainly compounded the pain.

It is now seven years after my son's suicide. It's important for other parents who are just starting the grief process to know that there is still hope. Life as you once knew it may be over, however, your life is not over. Your family's life is not over. You can get through this. The grief process is grueling and requires a lot of work, but you will find joy again. I'm not going to lie, some of the pain will always be there because you deeply miss your loved one, but you will be happy and engage in life again.

At first, all loss survivors toss and turn in anguish, wondering what you could have done differently, what signs you missed, what things you could have said or done to prevent the unthinkable. You mentally try to rewrite your tragedy.

Remember, the suicide was not your fault, so stop blaming yourself or anyone else. Blame only hinders the healing process and cannot bring back your loved one. As you make your way back into society, you will be faced with stigma and people's misconceptions about suicide, like your loved one was selfish, lacked faith, or was a coward. None of these are true, of course. He/she was in pain, a pain so unbearable that it overpowered and extinguished any instinct to survive. No living person can truly understand the exact level of pain it takes to end one's own life.

You will eventually learn how to politely "call out" people's misconceptions in a way that offers them information in hopes of changing their views.

The anniversaries and birthdays will always be tough days, as well as the days leading up to them, because your anticipation triggers memories, reminds you of your loss, and can even reopen some wounds. The good news is that even those days eventually get less painful over time. You learn



to make them days to celebrate your loved one's life and not special days of mourning.

Each year gets a little better. For example, you will learn what works best for you when you have to answer that painful question, "How many kids do you have?" Over time, you will learn how to live with your loss. You are a survivor. Your tragedy has most likely made you more empathetic toward others while giving you a better understanding of what is important in life. Use all of this knowledge in your relationships and interactions with others. Some of you may even choose to use your loss to help others. I know this continues to give me joy.

After my son died, I founded Nick's Network of Hope (nicksnetworkofhope.org), a suicide prevention nonprofit. Our website is an information portal to raise awareness, provide resources, and offer hope. Recently, I wrote and published a help book for those struggling in life or suffering the aftermath of loss, as well as for anyone wanting to help these individuals. *Saving Ourselves from Suicide—Before and After: How to Ask for Help, Recognize Warning Signs, and Navigate Grief* will help grieving families and people like my son. Knowing this allows me to see Nick's death as more than a tragedy. I can't change what happened, but I can use it to help others climb out of a dark hole and find hope.

You will find your own meaningful ways to honor your loved one. Picking up the pieces and rebuilding your life in a productive way that is loving and kind certainly do that. It takes time for it all to come together, so be patient with yourself.

Grieving is hard work, especially the first two years, but you've got this. Don't lose hope because better days are ahead. You will smile, laugh, and enjoy life again.

--Linda Pacha

Ways I Know that Life Goes On

I know my life is moving forward because...

Today I moved the waterproof mascara to the back of my makeup drawer.

I didn't make any mistakes at work all day.

I slept all night through.

I remember her smile...and smile.

I drove home and didn't expect to see my little girl greeting me at the door.

I remembered where I left my car keys.

Someone asked me today if we were going to have another child, and I didn't get angry and change the subject.

The first holidays have passed, and I'm still here. I haven't taken a pill to help me sleep in 12 days, We've starting talking about another baby. The knife in my stomach eases up sometimes. Morgan's baby brother is due in July; she's finally going to be a big sister! It's June 23rd, the day after Morgan's second birthday; I guess I made it through. Our little boy was born today, and I cried tears of joy not sadness. He has his sister's little pudgy nose.
--Kimberly L. Rhodus
Bereaved Parent of Morgan Louise Hope Rhodus

Seasoned Grievers...

Social Distancing

We have all learned this new catch phrase since the 2020 worldwide pandemic. But for bereaved parents, we have known about social distancing since we lost our child. We have all experienced the trip to the grocery store when someone you know chooses to go down a different aisle because they don't know what to say. Or the lack of invitations to social gatherings, especially if there will be children the same age as what your child would have been. We have all been warned that our "address book" would change after the initial mourning period.

On the other hand, I have also gone down a different aisle at the grocery store because at that particular time I was too vulnerable, and trying to speak with someone would only lead to tears. Or distancing myself from meeting someone new because the first thing most people ask is about your children. And then there is the person that just grabs on and starts crying for you and won't let go until you are also in tears.

I am going on 13 years since my son Keith died so for the most part have learned to handle my emotions. I have thought a lot about the mandatory social distancing. It would have been a great excuse to avoid seeing anyone. I already had no desire to get up and dressed each day. Or to get in the car and try to remember where I was supposed to be.

Then we have the masks. We all learned very quickly about wearing masks. We wore them to work, the grocery store, church, birthday parties,



family gatherings, and in front of most of our friends. Many times our masks only came off at Compassionate Friends meetings and maybe at home. Our masks had to also cover the eyes because we all know how telling the eyes are during grief. Wearing that mask was exhausting.

But on the other hand, I wouldn't have had the other people around me that helped me get through each day. There would not have been anyone to take me to Compassionate Friends meetings. I would have missed so many warm hugs. There wouldn't have been the face to face meetings that I so desperately needed.

I do know how much those meetings helped me and I worry about the newly bereaved during this time in our lives. I am thankful now that we have the capability for face to face "Zoom" meetings as we go through this pandemic. But for the bereaved parent, this isn't new, it's just different.

—Debbie McFadden TCF-Kansas

Newly Bereaved...

Tabloids

The line in the grocery store was long that day, leaving plenty of time to scan the magazines positioned near the checkout counter to catch the attention of restless, impatient customers. "Flatten Your Tummy," "Lose 40 Pounds in 30 Minutes with Our Amazing New Diet," "Eat Prune Pits for a healthy Sex Life," and on and on.

I thought about parents in grief. And I know the response most of us have in the early weeks, months and years of grief: What does it matter? Why should I be concerned about health? Life takes on a different meaning after a child dies. We feel like we will never again care if our tummies are flat and our muscles are strong.

If there had been an article on the rack that day about getting up when I'm not sure if I can walk, drinking water when I cannot even swallow, breathing in and out without sighing, waking up or going to sleep without flashbacks, staying silent when my heart wants to scream... I would have bought it.

--Alice Monroe TCF, CO

We were put on the earth to love them for as long as We live... Not for as ong as They lived.

--Alan Pederson

Friends And Family...



Do You Want To Understand?

You say to me, "It's been a year when will your grieving end?"

Why can't you be like you once were, a smiling happy friend?

If you really want an answer, though I wonder if you do, I'll take you deep inside me where sadness dims the view.

First, my friend, for your sake, come close and take my hand,

And we will pray that what I share you won't have to understand.

The "me" you once knew is no more; it died right with my child

A voice that's still forever, yet the echo drives me wild.

You say you lost your Aunt Bertha, so you have seen death too.

Aunt Bertha, however, was not your child - and she was 80, not 22.

I barely survived those first few months, coping was a dreadful task.

I'd tell you I was doing fine, while sobbing behind the mask.

If I talked about my precious child, you turned away in fear.

You couldn't stand to see me cry, nor would you share my tear.

I wanted you to speak of him.

Please, won't you say his name?

But you pretended he never was, so he died over and over again.

Oh, I see you're uncomfortable, you no longer want my hand.

So, as it was before we talked, my friend,

YOU DON'T WANT TO UNDERSTAND!

--Jan Brady TCF, Des Moines, IA

Helpful Hint...



GRIEF BRAIN – Hope in the Storm, A Mother's Journey Through the Storm of Grief on a Quest for Understanding, Healing and Hope

Since my son's death I have experienced these

same symptoms (symptoms common with chemo therapy), which has me asking, "Is there such a thing as Grief Brain?" Grief affects long and short term memory, as well as cognitive function. Complicated grief can have severe and lasting effects on both.

While grieving, you may feel absent minded or forgetful. Where once you were a master at taking a phone call, microwaving dinner and changing the baby all at the same time, now multi-tasking can quickly become overwhelming. You may find yourself easily distracted or have difficulty focusing or staying on task. No, you are not going crazy, you are not losing your mind, and you're not turning into a flaky person. Absentmindedness and mental fog often accompany bereavement. For most people memory and thinking improve as they work through their grief.

-- Tucker Scott / BlogSpot
Bereaved Parents of the USA

Welcome...



A Valentine to All My Compassionate Friends

We who have had our hearts so badly broken know each other.

We have lost a child, grandchild, a sister, or a brother.

It matters not if we've seen each other's faces.

We share mending hearts full of achy places.

At first our hearts feel shredded and torn.

We might even wish that we'd never been born.

We don't understand how our lives went so wrong.

Everyone tells us they're so glad that we're strong.

All we know is that we hurt to the core.

Because a child dearly loved is with us no more.

With time, patience, and understanding we begin to heal.

We begin to accept what is, and life starts to seem real.

Each time we tell our tale, each hug we receive Puts a band-aid on the hurting spots and gives - us reason to believe.

That we will feel joy again, that life does go on.

Though we're never quite the same, since our child is gone.

Compassionate Friends teach us ways we can

cope.
 Until we can live again and face life with hope.
 So to TCF members, whether we've met or not,
 Thank you for the band-aids on that bruised,
 healing spot. I Love You All,
 --Kathy Hahn TCF, Lower Bucks, PA

Book Review...



“Gone Too Soon” When Jonathan Baer’s 16-month-old daughter Samantha died suddenly and unexpectedly, he faced the toughest journey any parent could ever be confronted with; how do you continue to be a parent, husband and friend after such a loss? **“Gone Too Soon”** is written for dads and those who love and support them. The book describes strategies to deal with grief, and suggests a game plan to persevere. This uplifting story provides hope and courage to dads who have lost a child.

A Death Has Occurred

A death has occurred, and everything is changed by this event.

We are painfully aware that life can never be the same, that yesterday is over,
 that relationships once rich have ended.

But there is another way to look upon this truth.

If life went on the same without the presence of the one who died,

we could only conclude that the life we here remember made no contribution, filled no space, meant nothing.

The fact that this person left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to this individual.

Life can be the same

after a trinket has been lost,

but never the same

after the loss

of a treasure.

--Paul Iron

TCF Savannah, GA

Imagine

Imagine for a moment a mobile; all the shapes are of different weights and design.

But they hang together harmoniously; each catching the sunlight and creating a melodious rhythm in the wind.

Now snip one of the pieces; there is chaos, each of

the remaining pieces smash into one another, and what was a melodious sound is now a clanging almost wailing in the wind.
 When a child is snatched by death from a family the results are the same, multiplied innumerable times.
 --Stephan Barrett

In The Silence

In the silence Mom you hear me,

In the silence I am here.

In the silence you can feel me,

In the silence it is clear.....

That my spirit hasn't left you,

I am just a thought away,

You can see me in the shadows,

Anytime you look my way.

Look for me in the sunshine,

And the stars at night.

In the wind, trees and flowers,

Everything that is in sight.

Know that I'm still here,

In my death I have a new life,

And one day it will be clear.

So talk to me and look for me

In everything you do,

For I haven't gone so far away,

I'm really right next to you.

-- Joy Curnutt

He Never Gave Us A Valentine

He never gave us a valentine.

He never learned how to write.

He never gave us a valentine,

Although some day, I thought that he might.

No long stemmed roses in a white florist box,
 But some freshly picked dandelions and a fistful of rocks!

No heart shaped package of chocolate covered candies,

But a mud pie offered with little hands all sandy.

No pearls for me, or necktie for Dad.

But the bear hugs he gave were the best to be had.

He never gave us a valentine

On red paper doily with crayoned art.

He never gave us a valentine.

He merely gave us his heart!

--By Kathie Slief



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

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 Guerreva
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 Match
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley Match
Grandmother: Dorothy Match

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* 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 tributes were submitted this month

For Siblings...



This Can't Be

This is still such a shock to me
This really can't be!

I don't want to believe this is real
This is not something that I want to feel!
You just came back, you can't leave for good
If I could change this all...I would.

You were the one that was always there.
You were the one to always care.
Now a picture is the only way to see you.
I really don't know what to do.

You'll always be my big sister,
But life's not the same.
Life without you seems so lame.
No more car rides, no more late nights.
No more singing and no more play fights.

Where are you? You should still be here.
Where are you? I can't find you anywhere.
I need you still you just can't go away.
I need you here, please come back and stay!

Useless to pray you'll come back, you're gone.
God took you with Him to call his own.
But you'll always be present here in our hearts.
You always have been, right from the start.

This is still such a shock to me,
This really can't be!

--Lilli Pugh TCF Houston Northwest, TX
In Memory of my sister, Mandi

Questions/Answers from Bereaved Siblings

All of a sudden I burst into tears and cannot control my crying.

You have the freedom to cry when you need to. Crying is a normal reaction. You may feel embarrassed, but most people will react with sympathy and wish for themselves that they could cry freely. Crying is a natural outlet to grieving.

Why am I so mad at my sister for dying? She left me alone. I know it wasn't her fault, but I feel so guilty for being angry.

At some time everyone is angry at the person who died. Anger does not mean you loved them less; it means the loss is so great that you want the terrible pain to end.

I can't concentrate. I can't think and I can't remember anything. I think I am losing my mind.

You are not losing your mind, although it may feel that way. Your mind is probably overloaded. Not only do you have to continue to go through your daily routine, but your mind is flooded with thoughts and feelings for your brother or sister. This is temporary; your memory and concentration will return over time.

I have terrible nightmares. Sometimes I dream I am dying. I can't tell anyone because they will think I am crazy. Am I?

Some grieving people experience intense dreams. Dreams serve as a healthy outlet for the intense feelings you have during the day. As time goes on and you deal with your feelings, your dreams will become less frightening.

It's been a year. I no longer want to be with people. Their conversations are so trivial and shallow. Can you believe my friend thought the end of the world had come when her boyfriend dumped her? The real disaster is that my brother is dead! Why am I so intolerant?

Many people believe the second year of grief is more difficult than the first year. You feel less numb and more vulnerable to feelings of sadness and helplessness. You have begun to confront painful feelings and memories you worked hard to avoid during the first year when you were coping with the reality of the loss.

I feel so guilty for the way I yelled at my brother. We would fight about the silliest things. I'll never be able to tell him how sorry I am.

Brothers and sisters in every family quarrel and don't apologize after every argument. Even though you fought, you still loved your brother and he loved you.

Suddenly my parents expect me to parent them. I just can't handle it.

This is truly one of the, most unfair positions your grief puts you in. Try to share these feelings with your parents. Hopefully you will be better able to understand one another.

--TCF, Baltimore, MD



For Grandparents...

What Grieving Grandparents Can Do For Their Children

1. Encourage talking. Like you, bereaved parents have a strong need to talk about what they think and feel.
 2. Allow your child to cry. Crying, even sobbing, is healthy and necessary.
 3. Talk about your grandchild. Don't worry that it will make your child cry.
 4. Listen to your bereaved child. The greatest gift you can give your child is to listen.
 5. Physical support is important. You can certainly help your child in this respect if you live close by. The fatigue that is part of grief is debilitating.
 6. Take the surviving grandchildren for a day or afternoon. This will give your bereaved child some time.
 7. Physically hold your child.
- From - "For Bereaved Grandparents" by Margaret H. Gerner



From Our Members...

Journaling To Heal

Each time I look back over my grief journey, I remember the important role that journaling played in my first and second years of grief. Handwritten entries, some sentences, sometimes just a few words describing my emotions, helped me to define where I was in my daily life. As I review the tear-stained pages, I am reminded of the deep,

deep pain and the catharsis of the journal.

Whether I was angry, in pain, deeply depressed or just too exhausted to think, I wrote a few words, maybe even a few lines each day. I saw it as my connection to my son.

As time progressed, my journaling became writing and eventually I returned to the computer and began forming coherent thoughts and sentences, with subjects and messages to my child, myself and to others. But the process started with the healing of the journal. I learned to be very honest with myself in my journal because I never shared it with anyone. I didn't put on a mask or rationalize in my journal, as no one else would be reading it. I was completely candid, and I soon recognized my weaknesses, regrets, strengths and successes. Pure honesty and great insight were achieved in my journal's conversation with myself.

Grief therapists recommend journaling to bereaved parents quite frequently. Some people are able to find an outlet for their daily roller coaster of emotions through journaling. Some seek answers and others seek questions. Many parents feel they are connecting with their child through their journal.

There are as many reasons to journal as there are types of journals. While journaling may not be for everyone, we encourage each of you to at least attempt it for a week. Give it your best effort. If, as some have found, it offers you nothing and is a chore, not a treasured time, then stop and seek other forms of outlet. But if, as many have found, it offers you a place for your thoughts, your messages, your self-revelation and self-evaluation as well as a refuge from the world, then by all means, continue to journal.

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

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, February 4th @ 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 help at (310) 536-9305 or ConnieStar58@gmail.com, or

Leo at Liccica79@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: Feb. 1st for March 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.)

Our Website... Leo Licciardone 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.Alivealone.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Camp Comfort Zone: Year round Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (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
- goodgriefresources.com
- bereavedparentsusa.org
- healingafterloss.org
- childloss.com
- griefwatch.dom
- opentohope.com
- webhealing.com

survivorsofsuicide.com
 taps.org (military death)
 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 LEADER: Lori Galloway
 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 SPANISH TRANSLATOR: Albert Garcia
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Ken Konopasek
 WEBSITE: Joe Zelik

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik	Loir Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Ken Konopasek
Kitty Edler	Susan Kass
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	

National Office Information:

Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter: TCF National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. We encourage everyone use the valuable information it holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at <http://compassionatefriends.org> and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

The National Office of TCF has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register. There is also a closed group chat room for specific topics that you need to register for.

Online Support (Live Chat) TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live

chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. **Please Note:** Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to:

www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support

MONDAY--

6:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
 7AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings (open depending on monitor availability)
 7 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

TUESDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
 5 PM PST: Loss to Substance Related Causes
 6 PM PST: Bereaved Less than Two Years
 6 PM PST: Bereaved More than Two Years

WEDNESDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
 7 AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings
 6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

THURSDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
 5 PM PST: No Surviving Children
 6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

FRIDAY--

7 AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings (open depending on moderator availability)
 5 PM PST: Loss to Substance Related Causes
 5 PM PST: Pregnancy/Infant Loss
 6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

SATURDAY--

6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

SUNDAY--

5 PM PST: Suicide Loss
 6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

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 P.O. Box 11171 Torrance CA 90510

Please consider giving a donation in your loved one's name.

In loving memory of Jonathan "Jamie" Schubert. Dear one departed, we miss you every day, brave spirited child and brother. Rest in Peace

In loving memory of Andrew Patrick Sakura, 03/90 - 03/08
Love, Mom

A gift in loving memory of my son William Joseph Britton III.
Love, Mom

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 _____ 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.

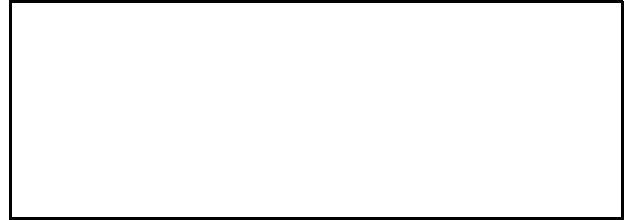
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South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.
We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief
so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

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

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

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

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

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

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