



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

April 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.

"Slowly Adjusting To My Grief" is the topic for the April 1st 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 Friday, TCF Sharing group takes place at Hoff's Hut's outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237th St in Torrance) at 1 PM. Call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for the reservation.

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

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P.O. Box 11171
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www.tcfsbla.org

Chapter Co-Leaders:
**We need a Co-leader
Could that be you?**
Lori Galloway (760) 521-0096
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The National Office of TCF
P.O. Box 3696
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
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The April 1st Zoom meeting will start with “Slowly Adjusting To My Grief”. Grief changes all the time. Some days it feels like a tsunami of pain has poured over our heads and it is overwhelming. Some days it is just a feeling that something is not quite right....and everywhere in between. We try many things to get past the pain and remember with a smile and not tears. While we savor our memories and take solace in the fact that we are learning to adjust to our “new normal”. We need to recognize the little steps and modifications we are making while mourning our children. Newly bereaved parents often ask how long will this pain last? The short answer is, “That depends.” We all adapt on our own time frame. At some point, we all look back and realize what we have endured and learned from in our grief. The following articles are reminders of how we **slowly** adjust to our losses. We invite you to join us on Thurs. April 1st at 7 PM on Zoom. Go to TCFSBLA.org and click on the link for the virtual meetings.



The Gap

The gap between those who have lost children and those who have not is profoundly difficult to bridge. No one whose children are well and intact can be expected to understand what parents who have lost children have absorbed, what they bear. Our children now come to us through every blade of grass, every crack in the sidewalk, every bowl of breakfast cereal, every kid on the scooter. We seek contact with their atoms — their hairbrushes, toothbrushes, their clothing. We reach out for what was integrally woven into the fabric of our lives, now torn and shredded. A black hole has been blown through our world and, indeed, it often does not allow the light to escape. It is a difficult place. For us to enter there is to be cut deeply and torn anew, each time we go there, by the jagged edges of our loss. Yet we return, again and again, for that is where our children now reside. This will be so for years to come and it will change us, profoundly. At some point, in the distant future, the edges of that hole will have tempered and softened, but the empty space will remain — a life sentence.

Our friends will change through this. There is no avoiding it. We grieve for our children in part, through talking about them, and our feelings for having lost them. Some go there with us; others cannot and, through their denial, add a further measure, however unwittingly, to an already heavy

burden. Assuming that we may be feeling "better" 6 months later is simply "to not get it". The excruciating and isolating reality that bereaved parents feel is hermetically sealed from the nature of any other human experience. Thus it is a trap — those whose compassion and insight we most need are those for whom we abhor the experience that would allow them that sensitivity and capacity. And yet, somehow, there are those, each in their own fashion, who have found a way to reach us and stay, to our immeasurable comfort. They have understood, attained each in their own way, that our children remain our children through our memory of them. Their memory is sustained through speaking about them and our feelings about their death. Deny this and you deny their life. Deny their life and you have no place in ours.

We recognize that we have moved to an emotional place where it is often very difficult to reach us. Our attempts to be normal are painful and the day to day activities carry a silent, screaming anguish that accompanies us, sometimes from moment to moment. Were we to give it its own voice, we fear we would become truly unreachable and so we remain "strong" for a host of reasons even as the strength saps our energy and drains our will. Were we to act out our true feelings, we would be impossible to be with. We resent having to act normal, yet we dare not do otherwise. People who understand this dynamic are our gold standard. Working our way through this over the years will change us as does every experience — and extreme experience changes one extremely. We know we will have actually managed to survive when, as we have read, it is no longer so painful to be normal. We do not know who we will be at that point nor who will still be with us.

We have read that the gap is so difficult that, often, bereaved parents must attempt to reach out to friends and relatives or risk losing them. This is our attempt. For those untarnished by such events, who wish to know in some way what they, thankfully, do not know, read this. It may provide a window that is helpful for both sides of the gap.

--Gail Schroeder, Boca Raton Chapter

The Butterfly in Our Lives

Most often we hear in our Compassionate Friends circles of the butterfly representing the lives of our children who have died. Their spirit lives on, and our memories live on, often in fleeting moments.

But I really think the butterfly's life cycle — metamorphosis — could just as easily represent our own lives. We seem to fit the four stages of that cycle.

THE EGG: When we are small, we are protected, changing and living in a somewhat small world—much like the butterfly egg attached to a leaf somewhere.

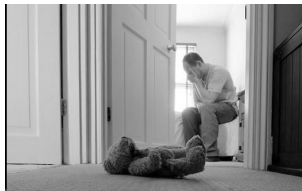
THE CATERPILLAR: The caterpillar is much like our lives before the death of our child or children. We go through the day doing what we need to do. We grow a lot and we change somewhat slowly. We devour many things in daily life—work, church, little league—and then the child is gone. We change!

THE COCOON: After the death of our child or children we shut ourselves off from so much because of grief. We often encase ourselves in the blanket of grief and depression because that is what protects us from horrible pain. We don't want to be a part of life, because of all its painful memories.

There are reminders out there which cause pain.

THE BUTTERFLY: The pain lessens and we begin to heal through the grief process, and we begin to see a ray of light—a little color. Some of the weight is removed. We break open our cocoon and begin to reach out ever so lightly and touch life again, just to see if it will hurt too much. As we discover the brighter days and brilliant colors of life, we become more like that butterfly. We are free once again to be a part of life and we can move about more easily and begin to take some of the nectar from life.

Dale Tallant, TCF Tulare, CA



Let's Not Forget About The Dads

People seem to forget about the dads in grief. They will ask, "How is your wife?" Not realizing that his heart has been ripped out of his chest. This happens often. But what is important to remember is that both parents share their pain and grieve equally.

Trisha's dad shares my pain. He is the only one in this world who loves Trisha as much as I do, although we both had a special, individual and personal bond with her. He is the only one in this world who could feel the same love for her as I did — as I do. I don't know what I would have done without him in my life, especially during these years of grief. We have cried so often, and most of the time together. He was my support, as I was his.

We would go for lonely walks together, talk about

our faith and how we truly believe God would not want us to suffer as we are. We would talk about Trisha and cry over our loss. It broke my heart to see him so distraught, knowing how difficult it was for him to hide his emotions at work and not break down as I so frequently did. He had his job to keep his mind active most of the time, but he also had low tolerance for dealing with people who complained about having a bad day. He kept a photo of Trisha at work, and newcomers, not knowing about our loss, would comment on how pretty Trisha was.

He would tell them that she was killed in a car accident and would speak about the tragedy, leaving them to give their tearful condolences and feeling devastated as they walked away.

There were times I would be so worried about him. After his 30 minute commute, he would enter the house with a loud and frightening outburst of tears. He would explain how he cried all the way home or chased a car because the young girl behind the wheel looked like Trisha, and he needed to get a closer look at her face. I would cry with him and explain that I couldn't lose him as well. He was falling apart before my eyes and I knew he couldn't go on like this anymore. I knew it could damage him both physically and mentally. I could barely help myself and I needed him to be strong for me. It was somewhat selfish on my part, but I wouldn't know what to do without him.

Many days I would see him entering Trisha's bedroom to cry to her as if she were present. He would then calm down, and with an excruciating sigh, repeat over and over "Oh Trish. Oh Trisha." Still today, he nods his head from left to right in disbelief, repeating those same words.

When I felt as if I were at my breaking point, he would be my rock. Being so upset with hysterical tears, he would comfort me with a hug, trying to be strong. Many times, we just held on to one another and used our shoulders as support when our legs would be too weak to stand. He was forced to play many roles: support for me, productive at work in order to get his job done, and still be a functional dad to our son who wanted to be away from us as much as possible.

I would hear my husband cry in bed softly as if not to disturb me and I would give him his "space." And on those days when I would be lying in bed crying in my pillow, he would snuggle over to embrace me until I was able to catch my breath and calmly stop. That was exactly what I needed. He was so filled with grief and sorrow it showed on his

face. He felt stress and it was obvious. He began having patches of hair fall out and his balding spots were becoming more and more visible. He went to the doctor and was told that the stress caused by the loss of a loved one was causing this to happen. He received multiple injections into his scalp and after many painful treatments his hair grew back. This was another loss for him, as his appearance has always been an important part of his physical demeanor.

People assume that a mother's love is the stronger of the two parents. Although we tend to both feel a special individual bond with our child, it is wrong to assume that the dad's love is the weaker. My husband would mention how others would ask about his wife and totally ignore the fact that he was filled with grief and heartache. He aches with grief and 17 years later he still cries. He will always long for his little girl. Moms are vocal but dads seem to hide their pain. I would think nothing of crying in front of a person while speaking of Trisha even today, whereas her dad, although unable to do it early on in our grief, will now try to hold back his feelings. I guess it is part of a macho thing and there is the old saying that real men don't cry. But do not let their masks fool you because a part of them is missing as well.

When we first arrived at our support group soon after we lost Trisha, her dad cried hysterically and could not hold back his pain and fear. We held hands for support, and the other dads embraced him soon afterwards. It was comforting for them to see a man break down emotionally and this allowed them to let their guard down and show their emotions as well. A father's grief is strong because of the image they try so desperately to uphold. In some cases, it is stronger than a mom's grief in having to physically carry around that image that forces them to keep their head held high when feeling pressured. Consequently, they bury their feelings.

Their children are their life. They are responsible for bringing their children into this world and share in carrying them; not physically in the beginning, but afterwards for a lifetime. They support their children in more ways than one and maintain that strong appearance as a tough guy, but it's only to keep their family strong and whole. When a piece of that is disrupted, they feel the burden and guilt of not doing their job, and failing.

A dad also carries the title and responsibilities of a husband and son and has the gift of being a problem solver, a mentor, and the one who fixes

what is broken even if it's a broken heart. When a dad loses his child, he feels hopeless and somewhat helpless because there is no solution and nothing within his power will remedy the pain. In most cases, dads are an important part of the foundation that holds the family together.

Never underestimate the love of a dad for his children. It is a gift he brings to the family both physically and mentally and it's his support that will allow moms to do their nurturing and loving. Anyone can be a father. But it's a dad that is the family glue.

--Paula Osipovitch is author of *Almost 18, A Mother's Journey Through Grief*.
Central Jersey Chapter of TCF.



Living When You Don't Want To

I can recall with perfect clarity the exact moment when I first realized I wanted to die. It was four weeks to the day after our daughter had passed. It was also our 20th wedding anniversary—a fact that was totally lost on me until late in the afternoon when it came drifting back into my memory like a stray cat you keep feeding in between disappearances. Time was lost to a fog, and the details of what took place and when, are still soft and loose around the edges in my mind, like reflections in a puddle. But we had only cremated and held her memorial a week or so before. And Harvey was either soon to descend or right behind us or maybe sitting over us like a bad omen.

It was my first time back inside a grocery store. It didn't help that the shelves were picked bare as if the end of the world were happening "out there" and not just in my head and heart. I followed my husband down each aisle like a shadow he couldn't shake, quaking with the onslaught of triggers that a grocery store holds only for the grieving, and most especially for the grieving mother. I couldn't think or speak. I could barely step one foot in front of the other. Tears streamed down my face and I was too wrecked to have the good sense to hide them. He kept turning to me and asking, "Do you want this? What about this?" And I would stare at him with blank eyes, unable to process his questions and growing ever more aware that I not only didn't care, but I needed out. I needed out of this building. I needed out of this experience. I needed out of this

life.

A thought repeated itself like a hammer striking in my mind, "I don't want to live. I don't want to live." And by the time we reached the frozen foods, the thought had grown in the light of my consciousness. It had stretched out and shown its full length. At last, after the umpteenth question about whether I wanted this or this, I remember screaming at him, "I don't care. I don't care what we eat! I want to die!"

I don't know how many people could see and hear me. They did not exist in my periphery. There were only the ache and nausea and the sobbing of my heart. There was only her face before me everywhere I went, and my failure. There was only the overwhelm of a love and pain so great they could not be contained anymore in space and time, and the thought that once it had been witnessed, could never be unwitnessed.

I wanted to die.

I wanted it. It was a desire that was not only new to me but one I could never have even conceived of before losing Ev. And depression has been an on-again/off-again companion of mine since the age of twelve. But it was never powerful enough to override my will to live until now. In the first days after her passing, the shock was too great for any cohesive thought to find its way through. There was wailing — the high keening of a mother's soul being ripped apart, and a deadening stillness that felt like falling into infinity. And there was rambling — moments of strange clarity and calm where I expounded, sometimes at great length, on abstract ideas that seemed to be rising and falling in my mind like stars bursting to life and then burning out. I was in a very literal sense out of my mind. And the desire to die, the desire for anything but her face and her voice and her body, was beyond my capacity in that state. But on this day, at this moment, almost a month later, desire entered me again. And it was a desire for what had utterly destroyed me only weeks before. Death.

I have lived now for 426 days with the siren song of death pulsing in my ears. With effort, I have lulled it to a soft whine on most days. But it never ceases. And when the maw of grief unhinges her unholy jaw and swallows me yet again, that whine becomes a whisper and the whisper a roar and the roar becomes a vacuum and in the vacuum, I am lost.

I remember looking my husband in the eye and telling him he had to send the guns away. I remember tearfully confessing to my surviving

daughter that I could not be left alone, not even for a few minutes. I remember the morning I stepped into the garage and saw Evelyn's car sitting there and thought with a wave of relief, Oh, how easy. Thank you, thank you. I remember rocking through tears more than once as I cried over and over, "I hate myself. I hate myself." Biting so hard against the impulse to die that I felt I could chew through my own tongue. And I remember the many times I swatted off the urging of others for me to seek relief from antidepressants because I could not say out loud that I did not trust myself with a bottle of pills.

I have come a long way from those critical moments, and yet I know enough to know that more critical moments lie ahead. It is as though my default modes have been reset. The low that I reach at the inverted peaks of grief and depression now is so far beyond any point I'd sunk to before. I don't think of myself as suicidal, even if the hotline is posted to the front of my fridge in my counselor's handwriting. And yet, it has been a hard dawning to understand how little space remains between here and there.



I know this will sound extreme to anyone who is not mourning a child. But for bereaved parents, this is a normal reaction to an extreme situation. I haven't talked to a mourning parent yet who has not contemplated death. My counselor calls it the brain's attempt to solve an unsolvable problem. And I debated whether I should write this post or not. How honest should you be, Anna? I don't want to be an alarmist. I don't want to get a thousand texts tomorrow from well-meaning people who have never felt this sorrow and find it shocking. Their concern only makes me feel more like a bizarre Daliesque creature marching through a world that cannot see or understand me. But I think representing the gravity of this experience cannot be underestimated. I think helping those around the grieving to recognize the depth of our suffering is as crucial as helping to normalize that suffering for the grieving themselves.

I don't want to hear another desperate mother tearfully and shamefully confess to me that she has wished her heart would stop suddenly after the death of her child as though she is less than human for feeling so. I don't want to hear another well-meaning individual whose children are all breathing admonish the grieving with back-handed platitudes while glancing sidelong at them with wide

eyes as though they are mad. Of course, we are mad. We are mad with regret and longing. Every breath we draw is a battle of wills. Of course, we are ashamed. We are full of horror and loathing at our own failings. We bend beneath the weight of our emotions until our backs arc like reptiles and our noses brush the ground. But if we are here, if we are speaking our devastating truths and crying until our eyes bleed, then we are fighting. We are fighting every second against the lure of eternal relief and the acute hope that somewhere beyond the warm flush of life we can be reunited with our children.

I think this one thing, this shift in perspective towards death, may be what sets us the farthest apart from non-grieving parents. Not only do we completely lose our fear of it. Not only do we look forward to it with a relish most reserve for paradise vacations. But we hear it calling to us in the hollows of our broken hearts. It's a calling we've all considered answering at one time or another. More than we would probably let ourselves vocalize. It's a calling we learn to live with. But there should be respect for the grit and bone and ire it takes to push on with life against the backdrop of the crushing drag of death's promise. Not shaming. Not judgment. Not disregard. But true admiration and a willingness to hold space for what we cannot know but can still recognize and can still witness.

Suicidal ideation is part of grief, too. Maybe not when you lose your uncle. Maybe not even when you lose your grandmother or mother. But when you lose your child, it is as sure as the sun rising the next morning. Some parents speak frankly about it. Others lock it deep inside the stem of their brains. But most whisper it into the ears of the ones they know will understand—other grieving parents. And we remind each other to keep breathing. We remind each other that even though we each feel isolated in our individual worlds full of people who have no idea what this feels like, we are not alone. We belong to each other. We belong to the memories of our children and our surviving families. We belong to our love and our pain. We belong to the living, even when we don't want to.

--Anna Silvermail Author's Website:
<https://www.sacredvoices.net/>

Anna is a crystal healer, spiritual teacher, YA author, and self-taught artist. Anna's world was shattered when her beautiful and beloved daughter, Evelyn, passed away unexpectedly in her sleep at the age of 18.



Choosing to Survive

I went to a wedding last weekend. It was the wedding of my son Davey's first love. She is a beautiful girl and I have kept in touch with her since losing my son almost five years ago.

When I accepted the invitation, I figured it may be a little difficult for us (my daughter was attending as well), but we wanted to be there for her special day. Boy, did I get that one wrong. It was brutal and it brought all kinds of pain and what if's that I had been able to keep at bay for a while.

My son Davey passed away in April 2014, the result of a car accident. It's still very difficult to talk about the immediate aftermath of that night. I was shocked and hysterical and in denial. My son had just landed his dream job three months earlier. The day he died was the day he had finished training and had been assigned to his unit. I just couldn't grasp what had happened. The week of his funeral, I barely remember a thing. I was so angry. Angry at the young men who had been carelessly street racing. Angry that they took off like cowards and left my son there to die alone. Angry at God. Why on earth would he take my baby?

That first year was so awful. I was despondent, I was angry and the worst part was, I felt so alone. I was surrounded by my family who would have done anything to get me through the pain. I just didn't think they could relate. I had lost my child. I had convinced myself that unless someone has lost a child, they just didn't get it. It wasn't true, of course, we were all hurting, in different ways.

I did something that I am convinced saved my life and that was to start seeing a grief counselor. She helped me to understand my grief and how it works. Dealing with so many other emotions along with the pain. There was so much soul searching during this time. I had to figure out how to survive in a life I didn't want or ask for. I had to eventually resolve my anger at God. Although I will never completely understand why my son had to be taken. It is comforting to me to think he was needed for a bigger purpose.

All the hard work I put in with the grief counselor (and continue to put in) has a way of crashing down around me when faced with a trigger. Normally, I keep things safely tucked into my heart and then BAM, something like the wedding comes along. We were robbed of Davey. Of his own wedding and

maybe a family of his own. Seeing people that he knew and grew up with. Getting on with their lives. While Davey's was cut short. I was sitting at the wedding and those feelings swirled around me and for a minute, I couldn't breathe. Through all the reading, reflecting and counseling I have done, I was able to calm down. Before, I would just dive right into my pain. Now, I have learned that I can get through these moments even if it does take a while. And then I try to tuck it away until the next trigger.

Those triggers will always come, regardless of how long it has been since Davey passed. I have a beautiful new grandson. When I look at him, I can see Davey. And that makes me both happy and sad and can even trigger that pain.

Losing a child is probably the worst thing one can endure. I have had to become a new person. The old Debbie is gone forever. I have learned the simple things in life are what matters. I have worked hard to find joy in my life again. I have decided that I can be kinder and more grateful for what I do have. I wrote a book, *Follow Your Bliss*, because I want to reach out to others who have lost a child. I want readers to know they aren't alone and to offer love and support to them.

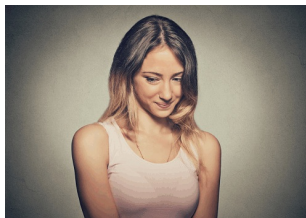
I want to do these things because they honor's my son's memory and they bring me a little bit of peace. And because my son would expect no less from me.

--Debbie Timms Prescott, AZ

The Wariness of Grief

I am from the South. My parents were both Southerners. I have never lived outside the South, in spite of the fact that some would claim Northern Virginia, where I lived for almost 40 years, is not really "part of the South." I maintain that it is. Friendliness is an entrenched southern virtue. I was indoctrinated in friendliness from a young age. It also happened to be an easy fit with my natural personality and disposition.

My husband alleges I can "talk to a post." He's probably right about that. For my whole life, I have had many friends in many places; friends from childhood, friends from college, friends from work, friends who were neighbors. I made friends walking my dog; I made friends riding the subway. Once my children were born, I made friends with the parents of their friends, made friends with their teachers, made friends with other PTA parents and so on.



Many, many friends. Obviously, I was closer to some than others. I maintained more regular contact with some than others.

I did have some experience with betrayal and rejection, but it was not so intense or so painful as to make me abandon my natural open friendliness. It took losing my son to do that. I am different now. I think I am still friendly in neutral situations, but it is a guarded friendliness. When I walk the dog, I still greet everyone I meet on the street. I have conversations with many, but these are short, superficial conversations. (These are not to be confused with conversations I may have had with strangers on the street in my most acute days of grief. In those days, I occasionally wept on the shoulders of strangers.)

I have become wary of people. I am wary of new people. It takes a certain set of circumstances, sometimes forced, for me to even confess to new people that I have lost a child. When contractors come to my house, I take down lots of photos and hide them so I'm not asked questions about any of the shrines to my son. It is rare for me to have such a feeling of safety with someone new that I choose to let them in on my secret. Sadly, experience has taught me to be wary even of people I've known a long time. I have been surprised by those I was formerly close to who have hurt me or disappointed me. Or who have disappeared. So, I wear my mask and conduct myself carefully.

Recently, I came across this quote: "Oh, the comfort — the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person — having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pouring them all right out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."- Dinah Maria Mulock Craik

So, under what circumstances do I feel this comfort? I feel it with my sister, with a few old friends, but mostly, I feel it with the other bereaved parents I've come to know through The Compassionate Friends.

--Peggi Johnson, Piedmont, VA TCF

Remembering The Good Times

Woodruff Road, near Greenville, South Carolina, was flush with cars on Sunday which was pretty usual after church. Nearby restaurants are an extra prize for attending Sunday services and Southerners' rush to them when the preacher says the last

"Amen."

We were in a mad dash for our favorite diner, "Bobbie Jean's Beehive." "Mama," said Alex, our six-year-old daughter. "What," I matched her tone of voice. "Are we there? I'm hungry." "Soon, baby," I sighed, half listening as I watched the other cars pass us in the fast lane.

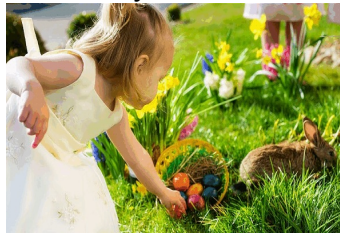
A couple of minutes later, I remarked, offhandedly to my husband, "my back hurts," and leaned forward a bit to massage my lower spine. "You need a Tempur-Pedic Mattress," the little voice in the backseat offered. "What?" I looked back at my cherubic-faced, sweet pea grinning like she had just solved the mystery of the universe. "Mom." She sounded a bit exasperated with me. "You need a Tempur-Pedic Mattress. It's made from technology by NASA. You put a wine glass on one side of the bed and jump up and down."

My husband, Scott and I looked at one another and started laughing. "Honey," I said, turning around as much as I could with the seatbelt holding me hostage, "where did you hear that," knowing it was on television, but she should be in bed at the times it aired. She must be sneaking downstairs and now she was caught.

She blurted out, "we need Ginzu Knives."

Our beautiful daughter died at age sixteen in a car accident, but I wrote about this incident because it reminds me of how funny she was even at a young age. It helps to remember the love and happiness we shared especially during times when my grief is so overwhelming.

--Written by Susan Tweedy in memory of her daughter Alexandra



"Just One More Time"

How many times have I woke on an Easter morning and smiled, knowing that the baskets were all set, the eggs dyed, and new clothes were waiting?

How many times have I watched with joy as the little hands reached for chocolate bunnies and jellybeans? The joy of those mornings will forever be etched in memory, sitting, waiting for a time to be brought to remembrance.

The children are grown now, except one, who is forever frozen in time. The egg dye has been put away, the baskets hid in the attic with all the other keepable things from holidays and special events. The children now have children and they go on their way in life, except one, who is forever frozen in time.

The new clothes to be worn are now packed away in storage boxes filled with mothballs, hoping to be kept forever, never to be worn by one gone from my sight.

The waking hours of that Easter morn are different now. No longer do I lie in my bed and wait for those sounds of joy and laughter coming down the hall. The children are all grown now, except one, and she is gone from me. She was too old for childish things, stuffed bunnies and jellybeans, yet too young to give it all up. "Just one more year, mama, let me hold on to my youth and enjoy the wonders of that day," she said. Just one more year! Now she is gone, forever frozen in time, and her memory is engraved in my mind. "Just one more time..."

--by Barbara Sockwell, Snellville, Ga TCF
In Memory of Ashley Marie Sockwell

"Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a sorrowful one.

Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like a miser who never enjoys what he has, but only bewails what he loses."

--Plutarch, Greek Writer 48-125 A.D.

Written on the death of his son who completed suicide.

Listen

Listen...can you hear it?

A heavenly choir sings.

Another little angel

Just got her set of wings.

There's joy and there is shouting

As she steps through heaven's gate.

They all lined up to greet her.

All the angels celebrate.

Her eyes are shining brightly

And a smile lights her face,

As she receives her halo

And takes her special place.

She's the smallest little angel

With the biggest kind of love.

She's wiser than an owl

And more peaceful than a dove.

And though there's joy in heaven,
 There is sorrow down below.
 broken hearts are crying
 Since they had to let her go.
 So she watches them from heaven
 But she knows the time will come,
 They will join their precious daughter
 When their work on earth is done
 --Author Unknown

Newly Bereaved...

Normal Feelings While Grieving

- A feeling of numbness—no feelings at all.
 - A sense of abandonment and desolation.
 - A sense of protest—"No, this did not happen."
 - Loss of appetite, an empty feeling in the stomach or "nervous eating" even when not hungry.
 - Difficulty sleeping.
 - Guilt. Awareness of aspects in the relationship that were less than perfect.
 - A feeling of "If only..."
 - Anger—at God, at the people around us, at the person who died for leaving us, at those who took care of the one who died, at things which did or did not happen in the relationship.
 - Restlessness and a desire to be busy, but difficulty in concentrating or finishing what is started.
 - Aimless activity and forgetfulness.
 - Wondering if you are "going crazy."
 - Searching for or expecting the loved one to walk in the door or call on the phone; hearing his or her voice; seeing his or her face; frequent dreaming about the loved one.
 - A need to tell and retell the details of the death.
 - Crying at unexpected times and experiencing mood changes for minor reasons.
 - A desire to remember and talk about life experiences with the loved one.
 - An awareness that other people are uncomfortable around us and don't know what to say for fear of "upsetting us."
 - A desire "not to be a bother" to other family members, while at the same time needing to express the feelings of loss.
 - Difficulty enjoying special days, like birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and holidays.
 - Feelings of loss seem acute at these times.
- Author Unknown

Seasoned Grievers...

Do You Know ?

Do you know what I've learned, that the deepest, truest healing offered by The Compassionate Friends comes not in the first few years, but later?

Do you know that just when you think there is no more to gain by coming to meetings, something you will say or do will help another, and another ... and exponentially, through your opened heart, there can flow riches, gifts beyond imagining?

Do you know that TCF's truest alchemy lies not in what we can get but what we can give? That by turning grief's dark energy and inner absorption outwards towards the hope of helping others we can regain a sense of purpose, honor our beloved children, and take them with us as we do? All this ... if only you stay on—or come back—to help those more newly bereaved, sharing your own unique path through grief and learning, along with others, what you did not know you know.

--Genesse Bourdeau Gentry TCF Marin County, CA

Friends And Family...



The Storms of Grief

When I grieve in your presence,
 Open the window to my soul
 The turbulence,
 The thrashing,
 The tears,
 The bitterness will not destroy me...
 unless they are forced inside.
 Help me get the pain out by listening,
 by showing me with your eyes...
 that you'll weather the storm.
 Please do not say too much.
 Just let me be.
 I'll show you the way,
 Then, please feel important
 when I can laugh and play again,
 For you are a catalyst
 in my learning to live again.
 —Elizabeth Farnsworth, Lynchburg, VA

Helpful Hint...



Talking about our loved ones will not increase our level of sadness; instead, bringing the name of a

loved one into a conversation is a treasured gift regardless of the length of time since the loss.

-- Author Unknown

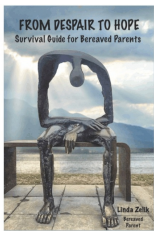


Welcome...

While it is never easy to deal with the death of your child, sharing your loss and pain with other bereaved parents can make the loss easier to bear. While some bereaved parents would rather just read the newsletter and try and deal with their pain on their own, I often wonder "Why?" Listening to other parents share what helped them, and not having to go through this pain alone, makes the loss easier to endure. The old adage, 'Grief shared is sorrow halved', I find to be true. We invite you to attend a virtual meeting and see how participating in the "experiences" of other bereaved parents can help.

--L.V.

Book Review...



From Despair to Hope, Survival guide for Bereaved Parents is the book I needed when first losing my son. My purpose in writing it was to help other bereaved parents and families deal with the intense pain of early grief. This is a compilation of my insights, those from other parents as well as professionals in relevant fields. Included are: what to expect on the roller coaster of crazy emotions, the complex stages of grief, and especially practical suggestions for enhancing the healing process. The unique challenges related to suicide are also discussed.

Although we all grieve differently, my wish is that this easy-to-follow guide will assist readers traversing their personal catastrophic loss. I believe the bond of love continues after physical death and share many signs from my son which have given me tremendous consolation and healing. I explain how to be open to, and recognize, possible signs from your child. Let me show you how to rise above your intense grief while holding on to the love and memories of the beloved. It is possible to achieve peace, acceptance and, eventually even joy after living through this life-altering tragedy.

Available in paperback and eBook at: amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.

<http://www.griefhelp4parents.weebly.com>.

Bow your head, and say a prayer, A child has died today...

No loss or pain can match the price,
These parents now must pay.
Heartache, sorrow, tears and grief,
Replace the smiles and joy.
That once were shared by those who loved,
This wonderful girl or boy.
Bow your head and say a prayer,
A child has died today...
A life of hopes and dreams is lost
In a future gone astray.
Reach out to touch, to hug, to hold
The ones who now must tread,
A path so lonely, long and dark,
Their precious child is dead.
Bow your head and say a prayer,
A child has died today.
A year ago, that child was mine,
And I miss him more each day.

-- Sharon Brunelle, Worc Chapter TCF

Spring Is Not Far Away

There is a smell of growing things about.
The snow looks somehow even more perishable.
Spring is not far away -
And memories move to another place,
Remembering: a squeaky swing
in the garden, going back and forth,
back and forth...
Remembering a bicycle taken out
for its first ride...
Remembering: incredibly wet boots,
cold hands, kissing-fresh faces...
So many things remembered,
How many lost?
Not one, not one.
The heart remembers always.
Spring is not far away.
-- Sascha Wagner

Compassionate Tears

I cried in my car, and was ignored.
I cried in church, and was pitied.
I cried at work, and was shunned.
I cried at home, and was hushed.
I cried at The Compassionate Friends,
And others shared their tissues & tears.
--Nona Walser, Greenville, SC Chapter TCF



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 Trillegi & Edward Dornbach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Max 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

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

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

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

Isabella Ofsanko
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15
Mother: Desireé 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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



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

www.tcfsbla.org

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

A Birthday Tribute to: Edward W. Myricks II April 1972 - October 2011



Happy 49th Birthday Son,

We can't believe it's been 10 years since you've been gone. There is not one day that goes by that we don't think of you and start to cry. Life is not the same without you.

I try to keep in mind something I read by an unknown author. I hope sharing it helps someone else.

“ Those we love don't go away
they walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near
So loved, So missed, So very dear.”

Love and missing you
Mom and Dad
Ed and Sandra Myricks

For Siblings...



Dear Lord,

You don't know me. We've never talked. It's not that I don't believe in You— it's just I never really included You in my life. Now I'm here asking a favor.

You see, my little brother was killed the other day— so he'll be seeing You soon. I never took the time to tell him how much I loved him or how much he meant to me.

When you see him, will You tell him for me— on second thought— never mind; I think he knew it all along, he was that kind of guy. Thanks anyway, Lord.

--Cheryl Larson, TCF, Pueblo Ark Valley OR

For Grandparents...



Staying Afloat When Grief Steals Your Identity

The hardest part of grief as well as the obvious loss of your loved one is the physical and internal changes within yourself. Your being. The body's response is sudden and arduous; truly your mind is not conscious of what is happening to you, only what has happened to your loved one. Yet, it may be months or years when you notice it.

After the shock has worn off, you may have had a chance to glance at your reflection in a distant mirror and you don't recognize who you see in the reflection. The you that used to be is gone. In that single horrible moment that I heard you were gone, a huge part of me went with you... a great big part of me anyway. So much of me disappeared the day you left and so much of me has changed that I am learning that I really don't know who I am right now. I question everything. Those of us that have lost someone so close to us so often say, "I don't know who I am anymore."

What happens to us? Our hearts are shattered and within our bodies the explosion of all that emotion and mental shock have caused so much damage we get short circuited. It's almost as if we are burned out. We are empty shells of who we used to be, left to figure out how to regain some form of who we are supposed to be now.

I questioned how any one thing could possibly hurt so much and not kill me. The grief is not comparable to anything I could ever explain. I still cannot comprehend how I lived through the first six months after I lost you. How any of us did. The gut retching, screaming without a sound pain you and only you alone can go through. I believe I know now that Konnor was watching us and trying to comfort us. His gentle hand on our shoulders, his tears raining down with ours. Perhaps he had a hand in helping us get through it.

The change in cognitive function. I was merely able to stare blankly at the television, cry and sleep (with the help of meds). I cannot bring to my recollection how I spent my time the first year after the loss of Konnor. I explained in previous blogs I had gone through a few jobs, I'd been unable to concentrate, to cope with any stress at this point. My mind was shutting everything out. I, in turn, let my body go with it. I figured I would rejoin life when I

was ready. Even today, I find myself forgetful, at times staring off into space, a disconnection of sorts, yet my mind is racing when I try to sleep. My thoughts will take me to horrible places at night, whether it is reality based or not. Why my psyche feels motivated at this specific time to attack with deep thoughts of situational probabilities and emotional conversation is beyond my comprehension.

Social skills. This is laughable. Who wants to hang around someone who is so depressed that all they do is cry? When I couldn't cry any more (surprisingly I was finally able to stop after crying every day for eight months), I had become so socially uncomfortable from NOT being around people for so long that I just gave up. The friends I do have that really know me, by that I mean the ones I have had for twenty-plus years, I do see from time to time. They make the effort to call and pull me out of my head and my home because we have the longevity and love that is needed to keep the friendship alive. I don't think I would have made it out of the dark without them.

Irritability. I don't know what is happening to me here. There is no distinguishing what can set me off. One thing may set me off and another issue you may think would anger me will not bother me what-so-ever. I do know that it does not take much to put me into frustration mode. I used to think I was a pretty strong person. Death has stolen my ability to be strong. It has crushed me. A minor traffic jam can put me into tears. A small non-complicated issue will have me searching for alternative ways around it. Avoidance is my new best friend. I used to be the "go to" person. In self-preservation mode, I can barely help myself. I can only hope that those I love and that love me will respect and understand my journey and not give me additional things to worry about.

Along with irritability, mood swings are its constant companions. There is no rhyme or reason for the ups and downs of my moodiness. Although I have figured out that the closer I get to the 22nd of the month, the more sensitive I get. Everything makes me cry around this time. I wish this number held a different meaning than the day Konnor passed away. The number two used to be my favorite number. I am very aware of my mood swings. If I'm not crying, I'm angry. In an instant I can be spewing obscenities out of frustration because something didn't go the way I felt it should. They frighten me in that they have no

obvious warning. With relief I only have my son to apologize to if I get out of hand. Otherwise, I just hide and ride it out.

Seventeen months have passed since Konnor left this earth. Seventeen. I have never asked myself when I think I will be over it. There is no OVER IT. I realize this is a process, an adjustment that may last the rest of my lifetime. Every single thing that has changed within me, every mood, every tear, every small step I have taken to figure out who I am now, is because of Konnor. It's still because my love for him is that strong. I can't let that go. Maybe that's the part of loss we have been trying to fight against. The letting go. Accepting the fact that we have lost them forever. We don't know who we are without them in our lives. And they were the part of us that is forever gone. But... maybe they aren't.

If we use what we have learned and remind ourselves that our loved ones are here with us (I know, it's difficult to comprehend... some don't believe), but they are still with us in spirit. It's up to us to put the pieces together and move forward with this as our guide. As hard as that is to do, I know Konnor would want me to. Every day is a struggle to move forward in this grief journey.

--Patricia Mealer

From Our Members...



"I began to realize that there were plenty of things to look forward to, and it was possible to be happy and keep her in my heart. I also realized that even though she died, I still had an entire life to live. I decided to live this life for her. For the both of us."
--Amanda Geisinger Submitted by Linda Cortes

Do you have a favorite poem, saying, picture, etc.? Sharing it does two things. First, it helps you in your journey toward resolving your grief. And second, by sharing, it helps others realize they are not alone. Please send any favorite to me, so we can include it in our newsletter. 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, April 1st @ 7:00 p.m. We will be having virtual meetings until we can meet in person. We send out emails reminders to our members with the link to the meetings. If you didn't get it, please message me and I will add you to the list. This way, you just click on the link in the e-mail to join the meeting. Contact the Zoom hosts, Leo &

Connie Licciardone for help to get signed up at (310) 536-9305 or Conniestar58@gmail.com, or Leo at Liccica79@gmail.com. You can participate by using a computer, smart phone or regular telephone. We hope you can join us at the next virtual meeting.

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: April 1st for May 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
- childloss.com
- goodgriefresources.com
- griefwatch.dom

bereavedparentsusa.org
 healingafterloss.org
 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.

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 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone
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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

No donations were received this month.
Please consider giving a donation in your loved one's name.

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 _____

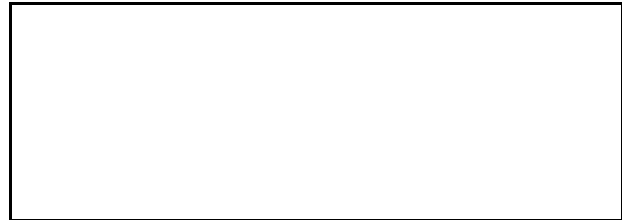
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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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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please contact us.