



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

June 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](mailto:Conniestar58@gmail.com)

#### The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...

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

**"A Bereaved Parent's Understanding Of Grief" is the topic for the June 3rd 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](mailto:Liccica79@gmail.com)

**The Friday, TCF Sharing group** takes place at Hoff's Hut's outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237<sup>th</sup> St in Torrance) at 1 PM. Do to dining restrictions, we must know you are coming in advance. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for the reservation.

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Kristy at (310) 938-2409.

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(310) 963-4646  
[www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.org)

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**We need a Co-leader  
Could that be you?**  
Lori Galloway (760) 521-0096  
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## The June 3<sup>rd</sup> Zoom meeting will start with “A Bereaved Parent’s Understanding Of Grief”.

We’re never ready to lose a member of our family... But we do. When it’s time to face that emptiness, when you realize you’ll never see that face, hear that voice, realize the dreams you had for them, reality sets in. The pain and uncertainty of losing a child makes grief even harder to endure. But we must. This meeting we will be discussing some of the in’s and out’s of grief. While everyone grieves differently, knowing what is generally ahead of us on the journey through grief, helps us prepare for our loss. Hopefully, the following articles can take some of the confusion out of what we are facing as bereaved parents. No matter what caused the death, the overwhelming pain, the guilt, anger, fear, isolation, and uncertainty of our sanity, know that The Compassionate Friends is here for you. Please join us on Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 PM on Zoom for the regular meeting or at Hoff’s Hut on Fridays at 1:00 at a mini-meeting to share the pain and find ways to manage your grief.

### Grief Is Like ....

One of the difficulties bereaved persons face is how to explain to us how they FEEL, when they are grieving. What does it FEEL like to be in the skin of a bereaved person? Is it similar to other experiences in our life? Is there a way we can relate on some level to the pain of grieving persons when we are not grieving ourselves. Most people can't allow themselves to go to the place where they could actually see themselves in the dark hole of grief. We don't want to believe it would be that bad for us, that we have the inner resources to minimize grief's hold on us, unlike our grieving friends. But if we can just connect their feelings with some feelings that we have experienced ourselves, then maybe, just maybe, we can begin to comprehend the impact of grief on a person's life. Then, after you connect with any of these feelings you need to remember to multiply your own feelings times 100, to get closer to the bereaved person's experience.

Here are some feelings that I've experienced while grieving or that I've heard other bereaved persons describe.

GRIEF is like being in a bubble. You are no longer a part of the world around you. Everything sounds muffled. You hear conversations, but it's like the words have no meaning. Nobody can reach you.

There is an uncomfortable distance that has been created between you and those who don't understand grief.

GRIEF is like looking through a one-way window. You can see others, but they can't see you. You feel invisible to others. It's hard to understand how the world can go on when life has stopped.

GRIEF is like wearing a heavy weight on your chest. You have trouble breathing. Sometimes your body takes deep sighing breaths in an attempt to get more oxygen. Sometimes you have anxiety attacks. And your heart actually aches.

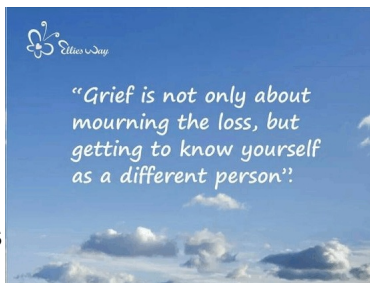
The location of your grief spot is right under your sternum close to your heart. It's no wonder that your chest hurts.

GRIEF is like wearing a heavy coat with all the pockets full of rocks. The grief literally weighs you down and slows you down. Grief is not only emotionally exhausting, but physically exhausting also. Because the warm glow of life is not pulsing through your body you may find it hard to keep warm. After a while that heavy coat of grief will begin to feel comfortable, and you may decide you don't want to take it off.

GRIEF is like being a traveler on a high-jacked plane. It is as if you have been taken to a foreign land where you do not know the language or the culture. Soon you learn you can never return to the world as you knew it. Grief can be pretty scary. You do not want to be there. You probably don't know how to grieve and you may not know what is expected of you. When you try to speak to your friends, they may not understand you. Your friends

know you have "gone away" for a while, but they assume you will return and be the same old you they once knew. But then you begin to realize you will never return to that place again and that others may never know or understand this.

GRIEF is like the stages of love: first falling in love and being totally preoccupied by your new love, then becoming comfortable as you begin to trust that your love will always be with you. In grief, as when you first fall in love, your heart longs to be with the person who's died. Your desire to touch him or her is overwhelming. Most other parts of your life seem unimportant in comparison. Then slowly, normal life begins to creep back in and you find that your grief no longer demands the high maintenance that it first required. You will have created a special space in



your heart where you can carry this departed loved one with you at all times, even as you go about other things.

Death ends a lifetime, but not a relationship.  
--Pat Schwicbert, R.N., TCF Online

### Questions-- "Why" and "Will They Forget"

As bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings we are haunted by several questions-- why did my child die and will my child be forgotten? Seeking answers to the why question is normal those first years. But as time passes we think about the why's less frequently.

We realize the answers do not change the fact that our child is still gone. As to the second question, "will they forget?" It's a question that plagues us and is difficult to answer.

In one Facebook e-mail I had to confront both questions. I received an e-mail from one of David's friends asking if I wanted to be his friend. I asked him several questions to make sure he was who I thought he was and also asked if he still thought about David. This was his response.

"Are you kidding me? I think of David all of the time. He is a part of me, and you need to know he is a part of all of us. You know that every time I visit with my parents, my Dad and I take our father/son outings as honorary trips similar to the ones we took during my childhood. So, every Saturday or Sunday we'd go to lunch and do guy stuff. Back then we'd often take one of my guy friends with us (it was sort of rite-of-passage between me, my Dad and my guy friends). David went with us more than any other of my friends. These days, the trips are more like trips down memory lane, and my Dad always brings up David! As my Dad recalls, David was the best at flirting with waitresses and getting women to smile and making us laugh so hard we'd be falling out of our seats.

I miss him. You know, I suffered from the same disease of addiction. I was addicted to opiates, same as David. I have been sober for years now. I keep a copy of David's poems next to my bed. I am thankful that my memories of him are all great, happy ones. We grew apart, mostly from his moving away, so I can't recall any of him as he grew away from us and toward his addiction. I guess I am lucky then, to be left knowing only the best smiling versions of David -- the guy who could get your attention with his smile and bigger than life personality. Those are the ways I remember him.



I'll never forget him. I don't presume to understand how you feel. But, I DO KNOW THAT I WILL NEVER FORGET DAVID. And, I hope I speak for all of his friends when I say that you can be sure he will not be forgotten.

I'd really like it if we could continue to communicate. Maybe we will find pieces of David we didn't know we missed by talking with one another ... that would be a good thing. I miss your family. And, I really miss the snack drawer in your kitchen that you always seemed to keep filled with the best snacks of all our friends' mothers! I hope you keep communicating with me. I am always available to talk about David."

What a beautiful, loving, heartfelt e-mail, I never expected a response like that; I was in shock; felt overwhelmed with emotions I hadn't felt in years. I cried. Then I asked myself the question I had pretty much put behind me, "WHY"? It haunted me for days. Why David? While I felt grateful that his friend is alive and sober, I'm left with the gut wrenching feeling of why isn't David. I remember asking this question those first years after David died. This question gave me something to strive for, a purpose to fight for. The question needed to be asked until I felt it was irrelevant, that it no longer mattered. This is a normal response. But what about now; I realized I was having a grief burst. The e-mail brought back those painful feelings filled with questions, anger and bitterness.

As to the question "will they forget", David's friend answered it quite emphatically; "are you kidding me". I felt lucky that David has friends who, nine years later still miss him and can express those feelings to his mom who dearly needs to hear them. David won't be forgotten, his life mattered. His, larger than life personality will live on through his family and friends.

The need to know our children will not be forgotten is so overwhelmingly important to us. We fight to keep their memories alive, that their lives mattered. To us our children mattered more than anything else in the world.

\* I am sad to report that John, David's friend died of the illness of addiction four years after he wrote these beautiful words. I shared this e-mail with his family. They were truly grateful. Sadly, now we share the loss of our sons.

--Lois Copeland, TCF Arlington VA

## When Death Is By Trauma

Any death of a loved one can be traumatic in its effects, but there are circumstances such as suicide, homicide, accident, natural or manmade disasters that make the stress of grief even greater. When a trauma occurs, often your normal coping abilities are overloaded. The intensity of your grief reactions can be severe. When death is unexpected and traumatic, your sense of reality is destroyed and everything feels out of control. Nothing seems real!

A sense of disbelief can overwhelm and paralyze you. Not only must you cope with the death of your loved one, but the cause of death as well. You may feel numb at first as you try to learn as much as you can about what happened. Unanswered questions can add to your pain and confusion. The shock, which initially protected you, gives way to frustration, fear or anger.

The world is no longer safe. If murder, accidents or drunk driving can occur where you live, anything can happen. Returning to that part of town, or anywhere similar may be upsetting. You may think you are going crazy, but you are not. When your reality has been shattered, your sense of security shaken and innocence destroyed, it is natural to be afraid.

Your anger may be so intense that it is frightening. Anger can turn to rage as you wrestle with the unfairness, the sense of injustice and the unanswered questions that seem to multiply. You might feel cheated, betrayed or helpless. You may be consumed with guilt that you were unable to help your loved one. The "If Only's" and the "I Should Have's" can attack at any time and send you sliding into despair as you realize there is nothing you can do now to change what has happened.

Blame and doubt become constant companions. A sense of helplessness can lead to frustration and may finally burst into anger as you confront the medical, legal and moral issues that often surround trauma. Don't be surprised if your grief resurfaces and intensifies as you wind your way through the Justice System. Because you are being bombarded by so many traumas, your body reacts automatically through chemical and hormonal changes. Grief becomes physical. Your body is trying to adjust to a new reality. In addition to the normal physical stresses in grief, trauma usually results in one or more reactions. These can include hyperactivity or agitation, nightmares, startling at sudden noises or disturbances, flashbacks, fear, anticipation, difficulty

making decisions or amnesia of the event. What to do now is to take care of yourself physically, be realistic in your expectations of yourself and others, don't try to lessen the pain with drugs or alcohol, become informed and knowledgeable as possible, find ways to release emotions, focus on one worry at a time, share your thoughts and feelings with others and find ways to memorialize your loved one.

Don't be afraid or ashamed to seek help. It is a sign of strength that you can reach out to take care of yourself. You may feel consumed by the details and trauma of the death for a long time. It is easy to focus entirely on the circumstances of your loved one's death. When your heart feels heavy with grief, lighten the pain with memories of the life and love you shared.

--Accord Publishing TCF Arlington newsletter



## Graduation Day

Today is the day you so long awaited: it is your graduation day. This was to be your new beginning. We had all planned to be so gay. But instead, my heart is breaking because you won't be there. In your place of honor will sit a solitary chair. They brought us your diploma and gave it to Dad and me with a copy of the program, dedicated to your memory.

But I was the student son, and the teacher, it was you. You taught me more of life than even you ever know. The hardest lesson I ever learned is one I wish I'd never known and that is, that I must live after you have gone. Often, when I think of you, I will sit and softly cry but, I am no longer afraid, my son, that I, too, will die.

I know someday we will be reunited, although it may be many years... I will once again kiss your sweet face and you will wipe away my tears. Until then, I can only weep and hold this to my breast, but always remember, as a son, you truly passed the test. So I will keep this safe for you and won't it be grand that when we meet once again, I will place it in your hand.

--Lynn Sarna TCF Little Rock, AR

## Father's Day

Father's Day not a big holiday like Christmas or Thanksgiving, but one that holds a lot of meaning for those to whom it applies. For first-time fathers, that Sunday in June brings a feeling of joy and pride. For a long-time dad, it's a reminder of the fulfillment



which children may have brought to his life. For those men who have lost a child, it can be a painful time. For those who must endure their pain in secret and in silence, either through their own desire for that approach or through society's expectations that they must be strong and controlled, it can become a horror. But we in TCF wish to acknowledge the day because the death of a child does not negate the parenthood of the dad who loved him or her.

Love for ones offspring does not die when the body dies and death does not succeed in robbing us of our parental identity. We wish all bereaved fathers a day of peace. In the midst of the grief and loss, may you experience a taste of good memories and remembered love for your child.

--Betty Roehm, TCF Mesa County, CO

## As A Bereaved Dad

By Jayson Greene

As a bereaved parent, I both dread Father's Day and quietly long for the recognition it brings. I am a father, after all, to one child still here and one who is not, and to receive acknowledgment for that is a balm. It is, of course, a torment of sorts. For those who have lost children, these holidays can be particularly trying times — their social media feeds will be flooded with picture-perfect representations of families and their children. Many turn their phones off on these days, unable to expose themselves to the drip-feed of other people's happiness. As Mother's Day is for mothers of children who are gone, these holidays often find us succumbing to our darker feelings — simmering anger, envy, self-pity, depression.

Five years ago, my daughter Greta was killed by a falling brick on the Upper West Side. The accident was freakish, a perfect storm of negligence and timing. She had been such a powerful little person, a force to be reckoned with even at 10 months old. Whether it was putting on socks, walking up stairs, or brushing her teeth — which consisted only of wetting a toothbrush and sucking off the water, over and over, until I gently pried it from the iron grip of her toddler fingers — Greta radiated unconquerable certainty. She was sure of herself, of who "Greta" was, and this world seemed to exist for her benevolent conquest. I still cannot imagine that

energy, so happily invincible, being snuffed out so quickly and unceremoniously. It is the part of the loss that still leaves me gasping, years later.

Ever since that freak accident, I have become acutely aware of what it means to feel expelled from the society of parents, one that I felt I had worked so hard to join. In the weeks and months after Greta's death, I WAS A BEREAVED DAD. The bittersweet balm of Father's Day.

I felt an awful need to walk up to parents — complete strangers — and inform them that I, too, had once been a parent. I resisted, but the words burned in me as if I had shouted them. Children's laughter, once the happiest sound in the world, became oddly mocking, even cruel, in my ears. I would walk past a young girl, maybe 7 or 8,

attempting a barefoot cartwheel in the grass and watch her flop over, laughing, and feel nothing but bitterness. Everywhere I went I saw parents with daughters slightly older than Greta — they were either reminders of what I missed or visions of what I missed out on.

Anyone who has lost a child has a complicated relationship to the notion of "luck," but I am deeply aware that in many respects my wife and I are impossibly

fortunate. We have a son, Harrison, born 15 months after his sister died. Therefore, Father's Day is very different for me than it is for other bereaved parents, for whom the choice to have another child is often not even an option. But even for us, it is a balancing act — despite visible evidence, I remain a father of two.

There is an absence in my life that is ever-present, and she is named Greta. On days when other families post selfies of their clamoring children and their quarreling siblings, her absence becomes more vivid to me than ever before.

So what to do, and, most importantly, what to say? I have been asked this question, by too many well-meaning and kind souls to count. What do you say to a friend or loved one suffering from grief over a lost child, particularly on days such as Father's Day?

I am no grief expert, so I will quote one: "Above all, grief must be witnessed." These are the words of David Kessler, an author and public speaker on grief who runs workshops across the country. I was lucky enough to meet David early on in our grief journey, and in following his lead and in meeting



many other bereaved parents I have learned some truths.

First of all: No matter the intensity of the pain a grieving parent may feel, the pain of invisibility is worse. When grieving a child, you learn early to live within the vast cognitive dissonance that is your life. You become an expert at distinguishing between kinds of pain. There is good pain, and there is bad pain, and the only good kind of pain comes from acknowledging your child's existence. Do not be afraid to speak the name of a deceased child for fear of causing the parent pain. Their name was given to them in love, it was spoken in love, and to speak it is to strike that joyful note again. There is nothing that parents love to talk about more than their children.

That never changes, even when the child is no longer here. The worst and loneliest thing a grieving parent can feel is the suspicion the world has forgotten their child. Speak the child's name; you may bring tears to that parent's eyes, but they will be at least partly of gratitude.

Individual parents grieve in individual ways, of course. Just as with love, each of us has our unique way of expressing ourselves. But while the names we give the feelings inside vary from person to person, the feelings themselves do not, at least not much. Every grieving parent you know is probably a little sadder than usual on Mother's Day, or Father's Day. Or Christmas, Hanukkah, or Halloween. Their wounds feel a little rawer, their grief a little more palpable. Do not be afraid of them, or their grief. Do not worry that you are going to hurt them further by acknowledging them; they are already in pain. Tell them that you see them.

Tell them that you love their children. Perhaps you do not need to wish them a "happy" Father's Day. But perhaps, if you feel moved to do so, you could wish them a peaceful one.

--Jayson Greene is author of the memoir "Once More We Saw Stars." This article was published June 14, 2019, on the Washington Post website.

## Who Rescued Who?

"His owner took his own life."

Not having met the rescued dachshund or even seen a picture, we all looked at each other and said, "He's meant for us." It was a sign. Less than a month after losing our oldest son, we traveled to High Sierra Dachshunds near Sierraville to meet this rescued 5 year old black and tan dapple



doxie.

Originally, our youngest son wanted a dachshund puppy. But High Sierra didn't have any puppies at the time. Home to about 20 Dachshunds, 2 Great Danes and a few rescued horses, we were welcomed by the doxie pack upon arrival. We petted them all, walked with them down their dirt driveway and all the time, Humphrey made sure he was right by one of us. We went back a week later to bring him back to his forever home.

Humphrey has been great therapy as our family heals from our loss a year and half ago. He is a good listener and would let you pet him all day. Humphrey, who also had a traumatic loss, has gone from a no barking, no toy playing, no eating dog to a confident ruler of the living room sofa and alerter of any visitors. He has numerous toys that he plays with and messes the living room up with. And he's gained about 5 pounds since the rescue, not from lack of exercise either. He takes us for 3-4 walks daily ... always sniffing like a detective and running uphill.

--By Sandy Woo-Cooper

## What Of The One Who Comes After?

What of the one who comes after,  
The one who's born at the last?  
What does he know of your presence?  
What does he know of your past?  
He knows not of your place in this world.  
He knows not of our heart's home for you.  
He simply knows your name's spoken  
Among tears, if now only a few.  
We'll tell him of days in your midst  
When joy was the order of the day.  
We'll tell him of your short life here.  
We'll love him the very same way.  
Although you two shall not meet  
In this life or where I can see.  
Your bond, though invisible, is strong.  
And brothers you always will be.  
What of the one who comes after,  
The one who's born at the last?  
Now he shall know of your presence.  
Now he shall know of your past.

– Janie French TCF, Carrollton-Farmers, TX  
In Memory of my son, Austin Matthew French

"Those we have held in our arms for a little while,  
we hold in our hearts forever."

--Author unknown

## Newly Bereaved...

### Moving On

How do I move on when there is no energy or will left in my heart?

How do I move on when that is away from what gives my life meaning?

How do I move on from a grief that has crushed me leaving me flattened, a two-dimensional relic of who I was before?

How do I move on when my brain is frozen,

unable to process this loss, these events, these memories?

How do I move on when I have no inkling of or desire to know what lies ahead?

There is no moving.

There is no on.

But something happened

Not day by day.

Not month by month.

Not season by season.

Not year by year.

Not anniversary by anniversary.

An infinitesimal FLICKER

Which became A TWITCH

Which became A FLOW

Which became A GESTURE

Which became AN ACT

Which became AN ACTION

Which BECAME A MOVEMENT... Moving

On

--Hopeline Newsletter July 2020

## Seasoned Grievers...

### Summer's Child

Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car.

Those were wonderful times for him. The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the



sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 pm DST), I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light .... the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightening bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time. I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience. We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width, or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.

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

## Friends And Family...

Dear Family Members,

There are so many things we have to "come to terms with" when we lose someone we love. How and when we do those things can really impact how we grieve and how we heal. For those just taking



the first steps on this journey the thought can be, "Heal...What's that? I just hurt and hurt all the time." We all understand that, no matter where we are in this.

For those of us that have been on this journey for a while, maybe reading this can be a reflective time looking at where we were, where we are and where we hope to be. Other issues outside of our control can throw a wrench into our journey. One wrench can be those around us and how they are addressing their own grief. Along with that is how, or if, they are able to support us. I have some thoughts I'd like to share about our part of the process.

Remember, we are responsible for our grieving and healing and not responsible for anyone else's. We have enough of our own issues going on. Last month I shared that I truly believe our grieving journey can turn to a healing journey if we do the hard work and dedicate ourselves to it. Even doing what we need to do can bring on feelings of "guilt" or that we're being "selfish" by taking care of ourselves. Without taking care of ourselves, we can't take care of others. Let's take a leap of faith and say we've gotten past the false guilt, no matter the source, and think about some of the things we may consider.

I think the first thing is the "Acceptance". I know, some just thought, "Hey, G! I was there. I planned a service, made and received calls I never wanted or expected to make." Yes, I remember. I did all of that, too. For lack of a better term, and I wish I had another, it's the "business" part of our loss. I look at that as Part "A" of the "Acceptance". We'll call that the head knowledge or the "Head Acceptance".

I'm also looking at Part "B" or what I feel is the "Heart Acceptance". That can take so much longer than "A". Here's what I mean. When a call comes to your phone and you look at the screen as you always do you first think, "I know it's not them" or do you just look at the screen and then realize you were looking for that number as you always have? Maybe you've done this; picked up that same phone and thought about pushing the familiar 10 buttons wanting to share a story, stopped and wondered, "What am I doing?" Or, while shopping at the store did you reach for something on a shelf that was for someone who would never use it? You get the idea.

It's our habit and our learned action. We've all done it or something like it. When we stop doing those things or don't always do what are our "default" reactions, I believe we've made strides to shorten what can be the greatest distance in the Universe, the 18 inches between our head and our

heart. Now when that starts to change even a little bit, it does not mean we can check that off of our list of things we hope to do and we'll never do it again. We revisit and redo "A" and "B" as many times as we have to. I think another part of this is the need to "Share Our Emotions". Now I don't mean blowing the eyebrows off of an unsuspecting person at a counter or register for whatever little "last straw" thing that ignited the pent up powder keg of our emotions. Our situation doesn't give us a pass to be nasty and rude. It took time for me to figure that one out. What I mean is having the safe place to talk about and express all of our feelings. When we talk about our emotions it's like the pressure release valve on the pressure cooker, diffusing what's being built up. We also need to talk about the sense of losing not just our loved one but losing our sense of purpose, direction and even ourselves. Talk about the anger, if you have any, whether it's at the person that caused the accident, the person who sold the substance, the anger at our loved one because they died and left us, or even the anger that the sun dared to come up. Remember, it's also important for us to express the moments of happiness or just not having the heaviness for us to take a breath. It's okay for us to take a break from our hurt and seize a brief moment of "ok-ness". It may even give us the motivation to seek out and accept more of those moments. All of the emotions are real because they belong to us. I think one of the hardest things to do is to figure out who we are now. The "New Normal" or "New Identity" of who we are becoming can take years to figure out, acknowledge and even embrace. What can make it so hard is that we were really okay with the "old" us.

Some of us had finally found our purpose. I had but it was my purpose for too short of a season. I mentioned last month about being in leadership with Sharon three years after coming to our group and the ocean liner changing direction ever so slowly. I never looked at it as a new direction. It was something that just happened little by little and all at once. It felt "right". It was the beginning of the acceptance of my "New Identity". I look forward to hearing about yours', your journey and your thoughts.

--Garrett Tollenger

Perhaps the Butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness, yet become something beautiful.

-- Author Unknown





**Helpful Hint...**

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

--Helen Steiner

**Welcome...****Who We Are**

We are The Compassionate Friends. We are your organization. We are you. No better, no smarter, no more experienced (well, maybe slightly, only because we have been at it longer), just fellow bereaved parents struggling along. We come from all walks of life. We are just people, grieving parents (siblings and grandparents) who are trying to help themselves and others. No pat answers, no glib replies, no religion, no color, and no judgment...truly, WE ARE YOU.

You may not know us all well. Say nothing or say a lot. No barriers, no requirements. Only the promise that whether you listen or lead, you will find genuine understanding and shared experiences. Come to a meeting and realize that you are truly not alone in your grief and loneliness, in your anger and the craziness and pain. WE ARE YOU!

-- from TCF/ Portland, Oregon newsletter

**Book Review...**

***Sometimes I Cry In The Shower– A Grieving Father's Journey to Wholeness and healing.*** As a grieving father, R. Glenn Kelly exposes the inner thoughts of a man who has lost the most precious of gifts; his child. Written with the powerful and honest emotion that only someone who has walked in his shoes can truly understand, R. Glenn provides encouragement, insight, and hope to men who are "in the club no one wants to belong to." He allows us to walk with him on his path from hidden despair to emerging hope as he discovers his way towards

living a life that is fulfilling and honoring to the legacy left behind by his son. Available online at:

[www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

**Gone From My Sight**

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze, and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her until she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come down to mingle with each other.

Then someone at my side says: "There! She's gone!" Gone where? Gone from my sight – that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of her destination. Her diminished size is in me, and not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says: "There! She's gone!" there are other eyes that are watching for her coming; and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: "There she comes!" And that is dying.

--Henry van Dyke

**Mother Of Sorrow**

I hate to look at my mother  
To see her in so much pain  
Wrinkles hiding her countless tears  
That would otherwise pour like rain.  
I hate to see her hurt so much  
But silently hold it in  
Struggling to beat the heartbreak  
When she knows that she can't win.  
I hate to listen to her cries  
Which she tries so hard not to show  
Grasping on to everything  
I wish she could let go.  
I hate to watch her smile so bright  
And know that it's all fake  
Sure she's "happy" every day  
But she's acting for our sake.  
I hate competing with the sorrow  
And I can't bring back my brother  
Drew is up there watching you  
He's living, loving, and laughing, Mother.  
--Kristy Sheldon Ashtabula, OH



## Our Children Remembered



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



# Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Max 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 Stewart Mead  
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Carol Mead

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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: Desiree Palmer

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



**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* For corrections or to add your child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and leave a message.

## Birthday Tributes...



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

[www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.org)

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

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month

## For Siblings...



### Why Can't I Let Go

You were always my hero.  
 I always wanted to be like you.  
 You were my younger brother,  
 Still, I always looked up to you.  
 You were always there for me,  
 Even when things were at their worst.  
 You helped me through my hardest  
 trials,  
 And we always made it through.  
 Now as I sit here, writing these words,  
 Remembering you and times gone by,  
 I'm trying to say good-bye.  
 Nineteen years are just too many,  
 To just let you go,  
 I can't believe you're gone, you died,  
 And left me here alone.  
 Some days I'm fine, some days I'm low,  
 But most days, I just miss you so.  
 It was you and me,  
 But now, what do I do?  
 Each night I ask why?  
 Why I'm so angry?  
 Why I can't cry?  
 Why I can't let you go?  
 I know we'll see each other again,  
 But the years seem so long.  
 I long for the day I'll see you again.  
 Waiting for me with open arms.  
 Brother, I love you and miss you so.  
 But now I need you most.  
 This time in my life is oh so hard,  
 I just can't let you go.  
 --Stephen Welch TCF, St Louis, MO

## I've Grown Closer to My Brother Through Grieving Him

Four years ago I received a phone call from my dad and the only words I remember him saying were, "your brother... he's gone."

I have two brothers but without asking, I knew which brother. It was my younger brother. Will was 29 years old and he suffered from a sensitivity to life. I shared the same sensitivity and found comfort in alcohol. He found comfort in something stronger -- opiates. And on April 22, 2012 he tried a "new" drug, Fentanyl, thinking it would provide him with a short break from reality but instead it provided him with his last breath.

The thought of living a life without my little brother seemed impossible. The pain was suffocating and to be honest, I didn't want it to go away. I know that may seem weird if you've never experienced such grief, but that pain was a reminder of how much my brother's life meant to me. The pain was comforting.

I was terrified of growing away from my brother. I was so scared that my brother was going to become a distant memory and I would forget all the little things that I adored about him, even the things that drove me crazy about him. I was fearful of forgetting what his voice sounded like or the inflection only he used on words and phrases. I would have panic attacks at the thought of not remembering what it was like to hug him or what his hands looked like. I didn't want there to come a day where I couldn't hear his laugh, see his smile or remember the reasons for them both. I wanted his whole life to be like an old song I could remember for years to come.

I would relentlessly look for pictures to provide me with memories that I had forgotten about from childhood, through college, and into our adult lives. I wanted to relive any time I shared with my brother that I could pull from an old photo album, a forgotten corner of my brain, or even family and friends that could provide me with stories they remembered about him.

I was mad at myself for not remembering every single moment I shared with my brother. I guess I thought I would have a lifetime of memories to share with him. I think that's what I grieve the most -- all the things he should be here for. It's not his death that I grieve the most, it's the years of life he doesn't get to live out.

There are a lot of things I'm sorry about -- things I wish I would have done differently. I'm sorry I didn't

get sober before Will died. I'm sorry we didn't get to share recovery together. I'm sorry I thought I had more time to get it right, and I'm sorry for waking up every day thinking we will live forever. Because you never think today could be your last and the reality is that it very well is for a lot of people. No one thinks that it's the last time you will go to sleep or wake up or talk on the phone or kiss goodbye. You think there will be more of it all. You think you have forever.

There have been days that the pain and fear have been so paralyzing that it's all I can do to go about my day get through it. There are days I wake up and can't shake the sadness and tears betray my eyes every hour or more. There are the "life's not fair" days that I get angry at everything including my brother. And it's all okay. There's no rhyme or reason to grief. No two people will ever do it the same, not even family. There are birthdays and holidays and family traditions that will forever be different. There are new babies being born, friends and family members getting married and new family traditions that take shape and Will should be there for them all but he isn't. There are a variety of emotions leading up to any big milestone where I prepare my mind and my heart that my brother will not be there. Sure, our family experiences joy and we celebrate life on all occasions but even the happiest of times are a little tender with such a absence missing from our hearts.

So much of grief is experienced alone, and I think that's the hardest part of grieving. At least that has been my experience. I rarely call anyone or even share the thousands of things that trigger outburst of tears and days of sadness. I do it alone because grief is so personal and unique. Maybe I think no one else will understand my individual grief. Maybe I don't want them to understand. I have come to cherish my grief as something special between me and my brother – something no one else is privy to – something sacred between me and Will that only we share. It's like we're ten again and share a secret made-up language that only we understand between each other.

Grieving for my brother is like being on a raft at sea. There are constant ups and downs. Even in the best of conditions I'm aware that I'm completely vulnerable to elements around me and that they could change at any moment. Waves of grief crash into me out of nowhere but sometimes I have

warning and honestly, I don't know which I prefer.

There are times it feels like I'm drowning, holding my breath until I can get my head above water to breathe. There are moments and periods of time where peace and calmness surround me. They can come in the midst of the storm but it's been my experience that I can always count on them to be there after.

To endure these grief storms you have to be flexible yet grounded, fragile but strong. And you have to realize and hopefully accept that you have no control over the waves and storms of grief – when they come, how long they stay, even their intensity. Hopefully you will come to appreciate them and the beauty and growth they provide. No storm lasts forever. You find hope in knowing the sun always comes out and you know then it's time to repair and rebuild and so that's just what you do.

You realize that grief will never let you forget the person you grieve. In some ways, I've grown closer to my brother through grieving him. It's not the relationship I wish I could have with him. Obviously, I wish he was here. But I'll ride out all the waves and storms of grief knowing I always emerge a little stronger, and a little softer, remembering his life like an old song I'll never forget.

-- Allison Hudson This post was published on the now-closed HuffPost Contributor platform. Contributors control their own work and posted freely to the site.

## For Grandparents...

### Grandparents



Sitting here with my grandson,  
I sit quietly and my mind strays,  
as I think of other grandparents  
and how they spend their days.  
Some spend them at the playgrounds  
pushing grandkids in the swings.  
Some lie in the newly mown grass  
and listen to little ones dreams.  
Running thru the tall grass  
with butterflies and nets,  
catching different kinds of bugs  
and keeping them for pets.  
Getting chocolate cookie Kisses  
and lots of "I love you's"  
Looking through old pictures  
and seeing how much they grew.  
But sitting here without my grandson  
I have no one to hold.



The angels came and took him  
when he was just a day old.  
So I visit his little graveside  
and I ask our God above  
to please keep Lane in his loving arms  
and let him know he is forever loved.  
—Grandma Orr from angels4ever.com

## From Our Members...



### Grieving During this Isolating Virus

Posted on May 5th, 2020 (compassionatefriends.org)

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

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

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

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

Right now you are dealing with the sorrow and isolation of today. Don’t look past today – today is enough. Take yourself outside for a while. If possible, take a short walk – it might turn into a

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

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

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

--Carol Thompson, TCF Tyler, Texas  
Submitted by Linda Curtis

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.

**Z**OOM... We will be holding our next Zoom meeting on Thursday, June 3rd @ 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 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 Licciardone for help at (310) 536-9305 or [Conniestar58@gmail.com](mailto:Conniestar58@gmail.com), or Leo at [Liccica79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccica79@gmail.com). We hope to see you then.

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



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

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

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

the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: May 1st for June 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 Kristy at (310) 938-2409. You can mail her a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and Kristy can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

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

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

**Thank You ...** Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. To make it easier for those who would rather donate online, just go to our website and use the donate button at [www.tcfsbla.org](http://www.tcfsbla.org). A receipt will be emailed to you for



tax purposes. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter. For donations at the meetings, attach a tribute to your donation to be listed in the newsletter. (Just a Hint: If you plan to leave \$\$ at the TCF meeting, you might want to make it by check so you can receive an IRS deduction.)

**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](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

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

Lori Galloway(chapter leader).....(760) 521-0096  
 Linda Zelik (former leader).....(310) 370-1645  
 Mary Sankus.....(310) 648-4878  
 Kitty Edler.....(310) 541-8221  
 Richard Leach (grandchild).....(310) 833-5213  
 Joey Vines (sibling).....(424) 488-9695  
 Nancy Garcia (Spanish speaking)....(310) 406-5163



**LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS**

- Beach Cities/L.A. (Manhattan Bch):** (970) 213-6293 Third Tue.
- Los Angeles:** (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
- Newport Beach** (917) 703-3414 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine:** (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim:** (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel:** (626) 919-7206
- Redlands:** (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire:** (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley:** (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
- South Los Angeles:** (323) 546-9755 last Tue
- Ventura Co. TCF:** (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
- Verdugo Hills:** (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.



**Local Support Groups...**

- Family & Friends of Murder Victims:** Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail [Roseydoll@aol.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org) (310) 483-8313. CCZ offers FREE one-day family programs, community programs, and 3-day weekend camps. All programming empowers children to grieve, heal, and grow in healthy ways. Our weekend camps provide children with the opportunity to break their isolation and realize they are not alone in a fun and healing environment. Grief evolves with each developmental stage a child reaches, so learning to manage grief in a healthy way is important at every age. Whether the child's loss was ten years or three months ago, encourage them to attend – you may have an opportunity to change the course of their life.

**Other Grief Support Websites...**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <a href="http://thetearsfoundation.org">thetearsfoundation.org</a> | <a href="http://childloss.com">childloss.com</a>   |
| <a href="http://goodgriefresources.com">goodgriefresources.com</a> | <a href="http://griefwatch.dom">griefwatch.dom</a> |
| <a href="http://bereavedparentsusa.org">bereavedparentsusa.org</a> | <a href="http://opentohope.com">opentohope.com</a> |
| <a href="http://healingafterloss.org">healingafterloss.org</a>     | <a href="http://webhealing.com">webhealing.com</a> |



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  
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks  
 TREASURER: Ken Konopasek  
 WEBSITE: Leo Liccaridone

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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

### National Office Information:

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

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

**Online Support (Live Chat)** TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to

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

[www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support)

### 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

In loving memory of Michael B. Ruggera, Jr. April 1951 - April 1996.  
Love, Dad

In loving memory of Dominique Oliver, May 1985 - March 2002 and Brandon Armstrong,  
July 1995 - July 1995.  
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.

The Compassionate Friends  
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510

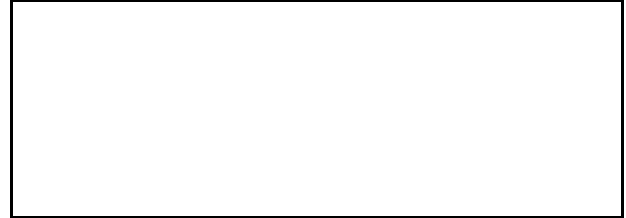
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– Return Service Requested –



**June 2021**

**Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly**



**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**©2021 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER**

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