



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

July 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.

“A Child’s Death Alters Every Aspect Of Our Lives.” is the topic for the July 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. 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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**We need a Co-leader
Could that be you?**
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The July 1st Zoom meeting will be "A Child's Death Alters Every Aspect Of Our Lives." No wonder grief is so exhausting. It changes every aspect of our lives... Some we are not even aware of. The dictionary defines grief as intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death. A simplistic definition true, but the death of a child encompasses so much more. Agony, distress, heartbreak, regrets, sorrow, all consuming pain and the injustice and unknown resolution of all the suffering that ensues. We focus on questions that run over and over in our minds... The unfairness of the death. The inner voice that longs to shout out. These we recognize. But what about vacations, friends and family that aren't there for us, guilt: real or imagined, other people's time lines for us, and many other less obvious hurdles to overcome? From the devastation that a child's death causes, we as bereaved parents must reinvent so many different aspects of ourselves. As grief seeps into every part of our lives, we change because we have to. Our children's lives are too precious to us to just go on as we always have. Our old world is gone. We must devise a new normal now. We welcome you to join us as we discuss the many things we must alter in our lives to accommodate our loss.

What Is Normal Now?

I was jokingly asked recently what normal meant by a friend and I thought about it and jotted these things down.

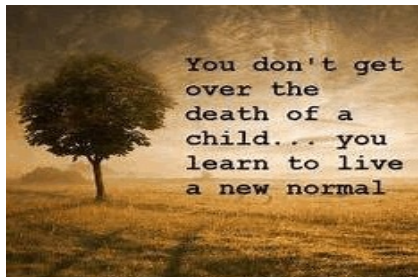
It is amazing what can become "normal" to us. I'm sure you could all change the names and a few circumstances and your normal is very close to mine.

Normal for me is trying to decide what to take to the cemetery for Christmas, birthdays, Valentine's day, and Easter.

Normal is discussing with a friend in the Netherlands how different funeral customs are there than here. Discussing how much both our sons loved trains and how the train sets now collect dust.

Normal is talking to a fellow musician at the Sandhills symphony practice and the conversation going toward how you felt after your child died.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with chat buddies who have also lost a child.



Normal is feeling like you know how to act and are more comfortable with a funeral than a wedding or a birthday party. Yet, feeling a stab of pain in your heart when you smell the flowers, see that casket, and all the crying people.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming because you just don't like to sit through church anymore. And yet feeling like you have more faith and belief in God than you ever have had before.

Normal is going to bed feeling like your kids who are alive got cheated out of happy cheerful parents and instead they are stuck with sober cautious people.

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile when you realize someone important is missing from all the important events in your family's life.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand "what if's" and "why didn't I's" go through your head constantly.

Normal is having the TV on the minute I walk into the house to have noise because the silence is deafening.

Normal is staring at every blonde little boy who looks about kindergarten age. And then thinking of the age Isaiah would be now and not being able to imagine it. Then wondering why it is even important to imagine it, because it will never happen.

Normal is every happy event in my life always being backed up with sadness lurking close behind, because of the hole in my heart.

Normal is seeing Ian in his long black coat and hat at the cemetery visiting his brother's grave and thinking, how could this be normal? He shouldn't have to be going through this.

Normal is seeing other kids that are Ian and Isaac's age teasing and playing with their brothers and sisters that are Isaiah's age and feeling so envious of them.

Normal is seeing Isaiah's classmates from church and Sunday school and wondering why he can't be with them. Why him?

Normal is playing my flute for a performance and feeling really great about doing well, followed by an immediate down after thinking how Isaiah would have said, "That was beautiful Momma" (whether it really was or not).

Normal is telling the story of Isaiah's death as if it were an everyday common place activity and then gasping in horror at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become part of our normal.

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthday and survive those days. And trying to find the balloon or flag that fits the occasion. Happy Birthday? Not really.

Normal is my heart warming and yet sinking at the sight of a penguin. Thinking how Isaiah would love it, but how he is not here to enjoy it.

Normal is getting up early to exercise (when I really hate exercise) because I know my mental health depends on it.

Normal is disliking jokes about death, funerals, and bodies being referred to as cadavers when you know they were once someone's loved one.

Normal is being impatient with everything but someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is feeling a common bond with friends in England, Australia, Netherlands, Canada, and all over the USA, but yet never having met any of them face to face.

Normal is a new friendship with another grieving mother and meeting for coffee and talking and crying together over our children and our new lives. And worrying together, over our living children.

Normal is not being able to rest until you get the phone call that your 15 year old with a school permit has arrived at school just fine. And having the courage to let your 17 year old not call after driving to school because he is insulted that you need to check on him.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned house, or did laundry, or if there is any food in the house.

Normal is wondering this time whether you are going to say you have 2 or 3 children because you will never see this person again, and it is not worth explaining that one of them is in heaven. And yet when you say only 2 to avoid that problem, you feel horrible as if you have betrayed that child.

Normal is feeling terrible hurt when you see your child's power point presentation at a parent-teacher's conference and that child has listed only one brother. Then you realize the way the information is set up there really is no logical place to list the brother who has died and went to heaven. And how awkward that must of been for him to think about the problem.

Normal is avoiding McDonald's and Burger King playgrounds because of small happy children that break your heart when you see them. And last of all normal is hiding all the things that have become

normal for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal".

– Vicki Windham, TCF North Platte NE



Summer and Grief

I'll bet you never dreamed that there would be a time in your life when you would not welcome a vacation from work ... and the day-to-day hassles of routine living. It's probably a shocker to you that the slow pace of summer, cookouts, softball games, etc are now a nightmare. Everywhere we go, there are kids out of school enjoying their leisure time, and our bodies jolt as we search for our own absent child who enjoyed this time of the year with a passion.

Surrounded by summer fun, a bereaved parent needs only to look around and there are painful memories at every corner. When we are faced with all the living happy, loving families with their children, the anger boils within and we feel very cheated. And this year we are afraid to go back to the beach cottage we visited every year, or to the mountain retreat where we laid around for a week and relaxed, or the family-oriented amusement park where the kid had to ride every ride and see every attraction, no matter what the temperature was. Yes, fear of our memories, fear of too much pain ... all of these feelings are part of the first few years of summer vacations for bereaved parents.

It's been nine years now for me, and I need to tell you that it will get easier, but found that for the first few years I needed to consciously change some of my routines in order to deal with fears. I could not visit the same places we had visited when Todd was with us. We tried new experiences in new places with new people. That isn't to say there weren't some down times; however, the faster, paced vacations worked better for us. I could not allow myself too much time to think. I enjoy those weekends away now, but for the first few summers I had to dig in the yard, repaint lawn furniture, rearrange the garage, and the multitude of busy projects we'd been putting off for the lack of time.

That was a better vacation for me, than forcing myself to go somewhere and feel miserable. You've read it a hundred different times, you have to find your own way and your own peace - leave yourself room to escape if it becomes necessary. If you can find any enjoyment and relaxation, relish it ... you

deserve it, and it does not mean you don't care. It simply means you are healing. Now I walk down the beach and enjoy the solitude, or laugh when I see a toddler, or listen to the joy of kid laughing, and it warms my heart. Yes, I miss him, but I know he enjoyed every minute of this season, and I know that is what he'd want for me ... and thank God, I can do it once more.

--Brenda Holland TCF Concord, NC

How to Deal With Friends You Lose After the Death of a Child

True friends don't leave us. Circumstances and miles may separate good friends for years with the only contact being the annual holiday card.

However, when finally together, close friends soon find that cozy place of their friendship.

We often have different friends for different reasons. Some friends might be skiing or hiking friends, while others are for sharing plays, books, events or juicy intellectual conversations. Only a few fall into the category of a close deep friend where we can share profoundly of ourselves.

These good friends don't abandon us after a crisis, especially after the death of our child.

Friendships are sometimes tricky, especially after a crisis. This can often be a sorting process of who your true friends really are. It is easy to have friends when times are good but what happens when the chips are down? We might instead discover that people we thought we were close to were not the good friends we believed they were.

There can be many reasons for losing friends after we lose a child. Some are that they may think we are not moving fast enough through the grief process and therefore are no longer fun to be around. Dinner invitations may cease for concern of the gloom the bereaved may bring to event. Other friends may not know what to say and therefore avoid us. This unfortunately can be true in tragic death situations such as murder or suicide. At a time when the bereaved need people most, they may instead find themselves isolated.

Another reason, especially in the death of a child, is the inherent fear that surfaces in other parents. Their vulnerability in realizing they can't always protect their children from death, is too much to handle. I'm not justifying their behavior but pointing out reasons I've encountered in my 25 years as a therapist.

In my personal experience after Kristen's death, I

had friends who let me know that I could call them no matter if it was in the middle of the night. I never had to because the comfort of knowing they were there for me was all I needed. These were my good friends. At the same time, I was conscious of others avoiding me.

This once happened when I was at the grocery store and saw a person I thought was a friend notice me and turn her cart around to retreat down another aisle. I'm certain she didn't know I saw her do this. On the other hand, certain people, whom I had not counted among my closer friends, emerged and were there for me when I needed them most. In a crisis we learn so much about ourselves, and so much about others. A few good friends are worth more than a thousand others. You probably have discovered who they are.

--Carol Kearns, PhD author of "Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare"



GUILT: The Bereaved Parent's Unwelcome Visitor

In my twenty-five years of trauma counseling, I can't remember ever counseling a bereaved parent who didn't, at one stage or another, experience guilt. No matter the age or cause of their child's death, the "could haves, should haves and wish I would haves" seemed to creep in....

Our most important role as a parent is to protect our child. We feel we have failed in this most fundamental of all roles when our child dies. Our nurturing instinct turns against us in the form of guilt. There must have been something we could have done. None of us want to believe that we are that impotent as parents. I have even had clients with grown children who have not lived in their home in years make comments like, "I should have told him he was drinking too much;" or "I should have encouraged her to go more regularly to the doctors;" or "he always drove fast and I never said anything. I should have."

When my daughter Kristen was pulled out to sea by a wave and drowned, her father John and his wife drove for several hours to the beach cabin where we had been staying. They hoped beyond hope that by the time they'd arrive, the Coast Guard would have found her and the nightmare would end. When I answered the door, the look on my face told

them the worst. Nearly, the first words from John were, "Carol, I hope to God, you're not feeling guilty." I was in such shock; I had no idea what he meant. However, it wasn't long before the shock wore off and the guilt crept in. Kristen was his flesh and blood as much as mine. If I hadn't heard those words I would have felt doubly guilty. Whenever I'd begin to spiral into guilt, I would remember his words. They became the greatest gift he could have given me.

In its extreme, guilt can grab hold and never let go creating despondency that side tracks the grief process. In fact, we may feel so guilty that we believe we deserve whatever pain we have. Our goal in guilt is to learn to forgive ourselves. This is extremely difficult if we believe we were such bad parents that we deserve the pain. Accidents happen. They especially happen to active vital children no matter what age.

It is extremely important to address guilt when the death is by suicide. When someone chooses to kill himself, we know his pain was intense and his hope so diminished. How could we not have known? Surely we could have done something to stop them? How could we have been a good parent and not prevented this? We must remind ourselves that if we could have prevented it, we would have. This is much easier said than done. If our guilt persists, we may need professional counseling by a therapist experienced with grief issues.

--Carol Kearns, PhD Marin County CA

The Fourth of July

The Fourth of July is now
spent without you,
This favorite day is now
only dark and blue.

The day with picnics has only clouds and rain
No sun will shine to ease this pain
The BBQ sits abandoned and cold
No longer used for your treats of old.
No swimming, no baseball, no games do we play
No ice cream or watermelon makes pain go away.
The fireworks display do not seem as bright
The colors are dull and give off no light.
This is the part of the day that you loved the most,
With star bursts and rockets that flew higher than the rest.

The Fourth of July, this party each year
Is now just a day, this has become so very clear.
It gives me no joy without you here.



Your holiday of choice -- we miss you my dear.

--© Karen Lynch, Dedicated to Tim

Love Never Goes Away

"Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing." Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so... we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be "crazy" and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself!

Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper. Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

--Darcie D. Sims

There Is Hope After Loss

My nineteen-year-old son, Nick, died by suicide when he jumped from a bridge just outside his college campus. His body was lost for almost five weeks. The week prior to its retrieval, I received a call from a coroner who had misidentified another teen's body for my son's. That boy and his girlfriend jumped just two weeks after Nick. Meanwhile, my family tried to remove two cruel videos posted online after the suicide— one making fun of Nick's death. Losing a child to suicide is horrific, and these events certainly compounded the pain.

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

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

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

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

The anniversaries and birthdays will always be tough days, as well as the days leading up to them, because your anticipation triggers memories, reminds you of your loss, and can even reopen some wounds. The good news is that even those days eventually get less painful over time. You learn to make them days to celebrate your loved one's life and not special days of mourning.

Each year gets a little better. For example, you

will learn what works best for you when you have to answer that painful question, "How many kids do you have?" Over time, you will learn how to live with your loss. You are a survivor. Your tragedy has most likely made you more empathetic toward others while giving you a better understanding of what is important in life. Use all of this knowledge in your relationships and interactions with others. Some of you may even choose to use your loss to help others. I know this continues to give me joy. After my son died, I founded Nick's Network of Hope (nicksnetworkofhope.org), a suicide prevention nonprofit. Our website is an information portal to raise awareness, provide resources, and offer hope. Recently, I wrote and published a help book for those struggling in life or suffering the aftermath of loss, as well as for anyone wanting to help these individuals. *Saving Ourselves from Suicide—Before and After: How to Ask for Help, Recognize Warning Signs, and Navigate Grief* will help grieving families and people like my son. Knowing this allows me to see Nick's death as more than a tragedy. I can't change what happened, but I can use it to help others climb out of a dark hole and find hope.

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

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

--Linda Pacha

Gone So Suddenly

As I laid you down to sleep
I never could have imagined
That you'd never wake up again,
And now I'm broken inside and saddened.

I feel so guilty for your death,
But I don't know what I could have done.
Should I have watched you take every breath,
My precious little one?

I spend my time second-guessing myself,
Although I don't believe you'd want me to.
I miss you so unbelievably much that
I try to listen for a message from you.



I think you'd rather I try to cherish
The short time I had with you,
And wait until we are together again,
When we'll laugh, love and play the day through.

Quiet as a whisper, you silently slipped away.
We thought you were only napping to energize for
the day.

But you were sleeping more deeply than anyone can
wake.
And now we spend our days missing you and crying
for your sake.

For such a sudden loss, there's just no way to
prepare.
It's going to take a very long time to accept that
you're not there.
--By Kelly Roper



Newly Bereaved...

Riding The Waves

I feel as if I have been body surfing in the ocean,
cruising at the top of the wave, enjoying the ride--
then suddenly, being body-slammed into the sand.
Unable to move, the waves rush over me, pounding
and crashing onto me. Occasionally the tide
recedes, and I lay breathless on the wet, sandy
shore.

I cannot move. I wiggle my toes, squint, open
my eyes, and see the rest of the shoreline. While
my view is obscured by my tears, the salty sea, my
straggly hair, and my prone position, there is some
daylight. Just as I prepare to roll over, and maybe
get to my knees, the waves of grief lap at my toes
and suddenly crash upon me once more. Unable to
withstand the power of the waves, I fall to the beach
once again.

Finally, the tide recedes again, but I still cannot
move. I am bone tired from my past efforts I am
aware of noise around me I can hear the chirping
birds, and feel the warm sun. The laughter of
children beckons me to once again open my eyes.
Helping hands are touching me, encouraging me to
rise up. Gently hands soothe me with their light
touch. Warm hugs embrace me. It feels good, for a
while, until the voices drift on down shore, leaving
me alone with the setting sun. I marvel at the

beauty and thank God for His presence.

It becomes dark again. The wind blows in,
bringing dark clouds and a chill to the air. I shiver,
and the sense of calm and peace is not so
reassuring. The tide is at my ankles, and my toes
sink into the sand. I can do this. I can stand up
against this set of waves...maybe. Or, maybe it's
easier to lie down and let them roll over me.
Better yet, I wade out further, a little deeper,
challenging the waves of grief. And then-- surprised
I lie down and float. The waves roll under me,
crashing harmlessly on the shore. As I float, I look
up at the rising moon. The waves lull me to sleep in
the moonlight. Maybe, just maybe, I will rest well.
Maybe, I can ride these waves. Maybe a new,
sunny day is coming.

--Ramona Lyddon, Chester, CA

Seasoned Grievers...

Heeding The Call Of Life

There is tremendous wisdom that is accumulated
in one's encounter with grief, and it needs to be
shared. Healing takes place when we turn our pain
into a positive experience and we realize that
helping others is the key to helping ourselves.
When that happens, our problems don't look so big.
We expand on newfound strengths and we discover
that as one door closed, many others have opened.

The road to recovery from grief, therefore, is to
take time to do things which will enable us to give
new meaning to our lives. That's when our journey
through grief becomes a journey of discovering
ourselves, our potential, and our resources in the
encounter with life. That's when we become
BETTER people, rather than BITTER people.
In grief, no one can take away our pain because no
one can take away our love.

That call to life is to learn to love . . . again.
--Father Arnaldo Pangrazzi TCF, Muskegon, MI

Friends And Family...

How Can Anyone Expect Me to Be Who I Was Before



If you know what I have been through, and you said
"I can't even imagine"
If you took time to go to the service, and you said
"Call me if you need anything"

If you sent a card or brought a casserole
 If you called a handful of times for a couple of
 months
 If you went home and thanked God for your family
 If you said a prayer for me or even shed a tear
 How could you ever say you miss the person I used
 to be?
 Don't you think I do too?
 If you never lost a child, be it yours or a grand, a
 brother or a sister
 I If you never had to kiss your cold child goodbye for
 the last time
 If you never had to pack up their things to never be
 used again
 If you never had to make phone calls to notify
 people of your great loss
 If you never had to cry yourself to sleep while living
 in a nightmare
 If you never had to watch your family fall apart
 knowing there was nothing you could do
 If you never had to read an autopsy or place an
 obituary
 How could you ever think I could go back to how I
 was?
 Don't you know that I would if I could.
 If you went back to work a week after my loss
 If you went on a vacation or sang in the shower
 within the next year
 If you went grocery shopping and did not breakdown
 sobbing uncontrollably
 If you look forward to the holidays
 If you don't fear listening to the radio
 If you do not envy all other families around you
 If you don't live life divided in before and after
 If you can't feel the real and constant ache in your
 chest
 How could you ever expect me to move on?
 And where do you want me to go without my child?
 If you don't speak of my child
 If you go on as normal like nothing happened
 If you talk in front of me of things about your children
 If you take family pictures and your child is not
 missing
 If you don't have an Angelversary on your calendar
 with your childs name
 If you don't fight back the tears at family gatherings
 amongst all the laughter and joy
 If you never said "I wonder what my child would look
 like and what they would be doing"
 If you never think about being reunited away from
 this earth
 If you have had one day that you didn't cry or

scream the word "Why"
 How could you understand or even have a clue of
 what I go through?
 And why would you think that it could be so easy to
 do?
 To act like my life was not shattered and torn in two!
 If I could it would make it better for you
 The person I used to be died with my child and left
 me with the shell that you recognize
 And I am trying to build another version of myself
 But it is so hard to do when you only want the old
 me and who I used to be
 So please don't ask the impossible and please be
 patient
 I have never had to do this, and I hope you never
 have to too
 Don't wait for me to be who I was before, that
 person had their child, and I can't make it like that
 now or evermore
 --Ruth Harris © 7/20/2018

Helpful Hint...



The anniversary date of a loved one's death is
 particularly significant. You will have done
 something you thought was impossible a few
 months earlier. You will have survived an entire
 year without someone who was as important to you
 as life itself.
 --Bob Diets, Loss After Life

Welcome...

Come Sit with me



Come sit with me awhile and let me hold your hand,
 I understand your sorrow and know you need a
 friend.
 I understand the pain that lies within your heart,
 I have felt the silent screams that tear you all apart
 I know about the sleepless nights that last so very
 long,
 I understand the emptiness when you hear that
 special song.
 Come share with me your memories and let me be
 Your friend, you can cry, laugh or say nothing at all,
 And I will understand.
 Come sit with me my friend, I'll try to help you
 through.
 I understand my friend, for I have been there too.
 -Judy Peckinpaugh TCF Inland Empire, CA

Editor's Note: While we cannot take your pain away we can be there for you and help you in your loss. We welcome you to join us.

Book Review...



Surviving My First Year of Child Loss: Personal Stories From Grieving Parents Paperback – by Mrs Natalie Himmelrich (Author), This book includes

twenty-six heart-wrenchingly honest essays by parents who convey their personal challenges and the ways they coped during the first twelve months after losing their children. Available on Amazon.com

Pictures On A Mantle

As I wake each morning, the first thing that I see
Your picture on our mantle smiling down at me.
I whisper good morning, I Love You Forever,
Make a wish that can never be.
Here's your picture as an infant, sitting on my knee
Now you're a toddler, how daring you could be
First trip on the bus, your first day of school
All the new friends you met.
Your first dog, first trip to the beach
How much better could it get?
There's your soccer team, your baseball team
Oh the pride you made me feel
A bases clearing triple to end the game
Could this be for real?
Out of grade school, on to high school
Your innocence almost gone
Your first car, your first prom
A young man you've become
A bumpy road in high school
Trouble we couldn't see
Lots of jobs, two years of college
An Associate's Degree.
At last, you were close to being
The person you wanted to be.
When you left that fateful night
You said, "Dad, I'll see you then."
How could I have ever known
That I would never see you again?
I know you're out there somewhere
In a place we cannot see
Your picture on God's mantle now
Smiling down at me.

--Tom Murphy Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chpt.

You Were On My Mind . . .

When I woke up this morning...
You were on my mind. You were on my mind.
You with that genuine enthusiasm,
like a kid with his first bicycle.
You with the curiosity and excitement
that dads love to be there for.
There's so much of you still with me... Still with us!
It's not fair that we feel cheated or
that we won't share your ways anymore.
But in reality, after all the tears and
inner feelings of pain and sadness pass
We will have joy and great happiness because
we shared your days. Your laughter. You.
And when I wake up each morning
It will be OK that you were on my mind...
You are on my mind.

That's a special place for you to be, because it will be forever.

--Michael Tyler, TCF Lighthouse Chpt., Lewes, DE

Dancing In The Flame

Though I am tired and weary,
My eyes continue to weep,
And my heart denies me the
comfort,
That I find only in my sleep.
So I sit alone in the darkness,
Before the firelight,
And stare into the flames,
On this dark and moonless night.
As the flames leap and dance,
I am surrounded by an eerie sight,
That evokes haunting memories,
Brought to life by the fire's light.
My thoughts take me back,
To a time when you were here,
To times when laughter filled my heart,
Times lost forever, I fear.
In the flames, I see your face,
Your sweet and loving smile.
And I know that we will meet again,
But I must wait a while.
These quiet moments of reverie,
Bring comfort to my aching heart,
And tell me that you and I,
Are never far apart.
Now my heart begins to lighten,
As sleep arrives to claim,
The pain I felt just moments ago,
Before I saw you dancing in the flame.
--Jacquelyn M. Comeaux



**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 Triliegi &
Edward Dornbach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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 Kropman
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12
Parents: Brenda & Greg Kropman

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

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

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: Desiree Palmer

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

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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* 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.

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

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

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

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:
Eric Vines
July 1977 to July 1991**



Happy Birthday Eric,

This year marks the 30th anniversary of your death. Joey, was thinking of you, and your thoughtful brother, found a beautiful butterfly wind chime on Amazon, to add to my collection. They are personalized with your name and different poems. It touched my heart to know after all these years you are remembered and thought about by others. This wind chime is my special birthday present and I wanted to share the poem engraved on it, with my TCF friends.

Eric, know your family's love is as strong as ever. We all keep you in our thoughts and wish you a Happy Birthday in Heaven.

Love, Mom

Listen To The Wind And Know That I am Near

I watch you everyday. I am always very near.
I know that in your heart, you realize I am here.
I watch you while you sleep in your bed at home.
I hear you when you speak to me. When you are on your own. You cannot understand the reason why I have gone, but I will never leave you, I am here to keep you strong. Talk to me, I hear you. Though you may not see, we share an understanding bond that will always be. Death can't keep us apart, for our love is forever. Just remember me in your heart, and one day we will be together. Love your life and live it full. Don't waste a single day. Remember I am always with you.

--Memgift®

For Siblings...**More On Surviving Siblings**

I gained a greater understanding of how powerful guilt can be for surviving siblings observing my son Michel after the death of his sister, Kristen. As parents, it is our role to support, nurture, and protect. This is not the role of siblings, yet it gets twisted into their grief as well. As a result, it is common for brothers and sisters to feel that they failed in some way.

Siblings may often believe there must have been something they could have done to prevent the death. And sadly, it is not uncommon for siblings to believe they caused the death by wishing ill thoughts on their sister or brother during a disagreement or fight. This can have unfortunate repercussions if the sibling dies. Well-intentioned people may add to the confusion by making statements like, "You need to be strong for your parents." adding an unnecessary burden for the child to now care for us. Michel also heard, "God must have needed Krissie." causing him to fear that God may want him too.

Survival guilt is also common. Not only do parents believe they shouldn't outlive their children, but brothers and sisters often feel guilty for being alive and enjoying life. They may believe as well that they need to be the perfect child to make up for the loss. This is a real complication of grief. As parents, we need to be aware of this and reassure them that they don't need to make up for anything, nor can they. We might want to tell them that the greatest gift they can give us is to be their own person and live life to the fullest.

When death lands on the doorstep of our surviving children at a tender age it most likely becomes their threshold into adulthood for understanding death can demand adult sized answers. I definitely noticed this with my son who was only nine when his sister died suddenly. He became a quieter, more serious boy. The innocence of his childhood was left behind when he realized his sister, his buddy, was gone forever.

Watching our surviving children come to terms with death of this magnitude, I've always felt, is the double-edged sword of the bereaved parent. We are wrestling with our own grief and the endless questions with answers that don't come easily, making us, once again, feel as helpless as we did when our child died. Being open and honest with our children and their struggle and keeping the

channels of communication open, can actually bring us closer to them. We can heal together.

--by Carol Kearns, PhD Marin County CA

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together. Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief. There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

--Mary Lamourex TCF Marin County, CA

For Grandparents...



The First 8 Hours

June 4th, was the day that my family and I tragically lost our beloved Macy and Loral in a train accident. To wake up one morning before daylight to find two of our beautiful young granddaughters, dead in a ditch just down the street from where we live. And to stand by as their lifeless bodies were extracted from a crushed car, and then lain out on the road and covered up with sheets, is an event that no amount of descriptive words can ever be written to fully communicate the intensity of the

horror, terror, trauma, pain, sadness, weakness, grief, disbelief, sorrow, helplessness, despair, despondency, confusion, outrage, pity, numbness, dumbness, regrets, illness, and all other impacts that are so invasive and so brutally assaulting your life at that time.

In a state of unimaginable horror, to come on the scene, and to call the girls names, to scream the girls names, to cry out their names, and to beg for response from them to answer. To hear Elizabeth, Doug, and Darian in the same horrific agony of their similar futile requests, still rings in my ears. There were no answers! There was nothing! This is what is termed as "The parent's Worse Nightmare".

To stand in the street for six hours, while the Coroner is performing his morbid duties, the Sheriff performing investigations, and the TV News Reporters converging and speculating on every bit of information they could find. All of this is a massive blur, as though a bomb had exploded and left us in a permanently disoriented state after the impact. In deep anguish I questioned, Why did this happen? How could this happen? Where are the girls? Why couldn't it have been me? How will my family survive without the girls? What do we do? How do we make arrangements? Can I be strong? Will anyone help us? After six nightmarish hours on the scene, I walked home from the accident site, which was only a quarter mile. I was lost in time, not knowing what lies ahead for us. I was totally engulfed in the horror of this day. How could our lives ever be the same? Why not me? Why not me? Why did it have to be my little girls?

When I arrived at my home, there must have been 60 people there. I spoke to my wife, Elizabeth, to my son, Dawson, to my son, Doug, and to my daughter, Donna, and then I went into the house and talked to a few friends before I tried to lay down for some rest and to gain some perspective. Rest would not come and perspective nowhere near. The horror and trauma continued to engulf and decay all of my senses.

I was not alone in the alien form of emotions. My helplessness and sadness of having to see my Wife, my Sons, the Mothers, and the Siblings having to endure the same brutal assault of this day, is beyond any attempts to convey with words.

Losing young Children! There is nothing worse! It is just not fair!

A book could be written about the first 8 hour of feelings and thoughts of that most horrible morning of our lives. But this is not the end of the story! This not all of the pain! The real pain came later! And

Continues! The "Parent's Worst Nightmare" has not ended, lives have been shattered! What does the future have in store for us? Every day, we wear a mask to cover the deep scars that only "People Like Us", who have lost young children, can possibly wear. "

The true impact of losing young children was truly impossible to understand before, "but now", to all who have lost young children, I deeply, and unfortunately; understand what you have experienced.

I know we will get better in time, but will always carry this burden. The mask will always be there.
--Paw Paw (Donald Moyer), TCF Galveston County, TX In memory of Macy and Loral

Siblings may be ambivalent about their relationships in life but in death the power of their bond strangles the surviving heart. Death reminds us that we are part of the same river, the same flow from the same source, rushing towards the same destiny. Were you close?

Yes but we didn't know it then.

--Barbara Ascher, Landscape without Gravity

From Our Members...



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, July 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 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, or Leo at 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

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: July 1st for August 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 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	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)	

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER 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	Lori 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

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

National Conference:

TCF's 44th National Conference will be presented virtually July 16-18, 2021. Although we would love to be together in person, we can still

connect, support, and gather as a community through our virtual event.

COMMENTS FROM THE 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

“The Conference meant so much to me. It was beautifully presented. I will always be grateful that I was able to attend.” – 2020 Virtual Conference Attendee

“I am very grateful for all your hard work putting together such an amazing 3 day event. I am newly bereaved and this conference was that ray of sunshine that I needed. The Compassionate Friends conference has given me tools that I didn't even know I needed to help me ease some of this pain in my heart.” – 2020 Virtual Conference Attendee

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Registration – \$95

The Compassionate Friends National Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program.

(This year there will be no Walk to Remember.)

This time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.

For more information and to register for the event go to www.compassionatefriends.org and click on The National Conference





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 Eric Douglas Vines, July 1977 - July 1991. Happy Birthday Eric! Thank Goodness, the Covid restrictions are being lifted in time for our tradition of going to Hoff's Hut for your birthday breakfast. We wish you a Happy Birthday in Heaven again this year.

Love, Mom, Kelly and Joey

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

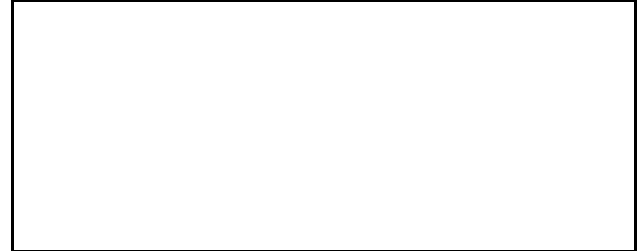
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*"The caterpillar dies
so the butterfly could be born.
And, yet,
the caterpillar lives in the butterfly
and they are but one.
So, when I die,
it will be that I have been transformed
from the caterpillar of earth
to the butterfly of the universe."
~ John Harricharan*

July 2021

-- Return Service Requested --



Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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