



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Sept 2021 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be **September 1st, the first**  
**Wednesday of the month at 7:00 P.M.**

#### **LOCATION:**

**The Neighborhood Church**  
**415 Paseo Del Mar**  
**Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274**  
**(South of Torrance Beach)**

DIRECTIONS: Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

**--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--**

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

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

**The Wed., Sept. 1st meeting will start with "Clichés Of Grief And The Things That People Say." See pg 16 for the link for our LAST Zoom meeting, held on Thurs. Sept 2nd.**

The 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. every Friday. All are invited. 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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## The Wednesday, Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will start with "Clichés of grief and the things that people say."

People say cruel things, sometimes without even realizing it. Sometimes we even question ourselves with our own stupid thoughts. All of us at one time or another have said something we wish we could take back. As newly bereaved parents, we are at our emotional worst and very vulnerable. With time we learn to overlook some of the unintentional pain those remarks have had on us. The following articles may help put some of those clichés and remarks in a different perspective. Join us this meeting as we try and gain a better understanding of how and why other people's remarks affect grieving families.

### How TCF Helps

At our TCF meeting last night, our topic was on the clichés of grief and the things that people say that hurt us. One of the moms in our group spoke of someone saying to her, "You must have done something terrible in your life to deserve to have your son die!" Can you believe it? Well, of course you can. We all have had these kinds of things said to us, either in ignorance or they thought they were the right things to say, but nonetheless they hurt just the same. We have so much guilt anyway; we are plagued by the "what ifs" and the "if onlys" and are most often our own worst enemy. Because we are parents we feel that we had failed our precious children as protectors...we were supposed to keep them out of harm's way. Only when something like this happens – our child or sibling or grandchild dies – do we come to realize that we have absolutely no control over much of anything. And that lack of control can be very frightening.

We learn life lessons that we never wanted to learn. Because we are in TCF and are acquainted with those who have lost more than one child or multiple family members we know that lightning not only can strike twice, but three or more times. If we have surviving children and they are out for an evening we watch the clock and count the minutes that they are late and torment ourselves. It is almost as if we wait for the other shoe to drop.

The "why's" we will never know; at least while we dwell on this planet. When we join our lost children maybe we will find the answer to our questions. Until then, we have our family and friends and TCF and this wonderful Sharing Line to remind each



other that we are truly not alone. We can pour out what is in our minds and hearts to each other and know that others will be there with just the right words or how-to-survive-the-worst-loss suggestions to help pull us through. And that we will be there for them as well. There is a saying that goes, "Grief can't be hurried; but grief can be shared." Thank you all for continuing to be there. Where would be without each other?

--Cathy Seehuetter - TCF, St. Paul, MN

### The One Person Who Doesn't Rationalize or Deny Grief

Since your child or sibling or grandchild died have you noticed that people seem to say a lot of things that lead you to say to yourself, "What was she thinking?" or "Where did that come from?" You've probably wondered why people would say things to you that make no sense and, in some cases, proved to be hurtful. Well, the answer lies deep in that three-pound organ—the brain. On one hand, our brain can solve complex problems, invent new things, and create wondrous works of art.

However, in responding to people and events, our brain is sometimes quite simple in the way that it works. Think of your brain as having two major functions: (a) to reduce pain and (b) to make sense out of the world around it. A lot of what we do each day stems from these two functions. When we're uncomfortable, hurt or when someone offends us, what does our brain do? It cries out to stop the pain. When we encounter physical or emotional distress, our brain insists, "Stop this discomfort and stop it now!"

The death of a child is not only painful, it makes no sense. When people hear of this tragedy, their brains may attempt to come to the rescue by finding something— anything—that will give this horrible event some meaning, some reason for existing. In the midst of its discomfort, pain and confusion, our brain does whatever it can to reduce it. As a result, the brain quickly invokes phrases such as, "It was God's will." "Everything happens for a reason." Or "God needed another angel." Upon uttering such words, the brain concludes, "Yes, that'll help make sense of this tragedy." And, here's an added bonus for the brain: it will also reduce some discomfort. So, with one phrase the brain has dealt with its two major functions: reducing pain and making sense of the world.

In response to the grief of another person, the

brain finds a way to soothe itself by what psychologists call Ego Defense Mechanisms. They serve the dual brain function by simultaneously reducing pain and making sense of a situation. Let's look at two of the more popular Defense Mechanisms and how they figure into the unhelpful things people say to us in the midst of our grief.

**Rationalization**—the queen of Defense Mechanisms. Why? Because people use it all the time in an attempt to feel better. Its function involves the use of false excuses for one's behavior. When a person is confronted with the question, when you were face-to-face with a person in grief, why in the world did you offer a cliché, the rationalizing answer that bubbles up is, "Well, I was only trying to help." When asked, "When speaking with your friend, why don't you bring up his son's name?"

Rationalization again comes to the rescue with, "Oh, I didn't want to make him feel bad by reminding him what he lost." Are you getting the picture? Until people know better, they will protect their brain by rationalizing their actions (or non-actions).

**Denial**—The amount of pain you have experienced since the death of your precious loved one is immeasurable. The people around you can only imagine how much you hurt on a moment-to-moment basis. Their brain will not permit them to even truly attempt to imagine how excruciating the pain has been. Instead, they will look for clues that suggest your pain isn't "that bad anymore." For example, when they see you laugh, they may convince themselves that things are getting better—that the old you is coming back. As the weeks turn into months and then into years, the person may deny that the pain of the loss can, in an instant, still return with a vengeance. They may find it hard to believe that, even years later, your heart skips a beat when you suddenly see a similar looking person.

Because these folks are not living your nightmare (not that you would want them to), they don't understand how crazy grief can be. Because they've not walked your path nor lived your story, they cannot understand that grief is not a "getting-a-little-better-each-day" voyage but instead a roller coaster journey of ups, mostly downs, with dark tunnels and out-of-control feelings.

**That One Amazing Person**—The people around you may be well-meaning, caring individuals. Unfortunately, as we've seen for many of them, their brains get in the way of really helping. What we need is something that will convince people who

claim they wish to help us to stay with their own pain, to not be tempted to make sense out of a senseless situation. What we need are people who would be brave enough to fight against their own brains. Of course, this is asking a lot.

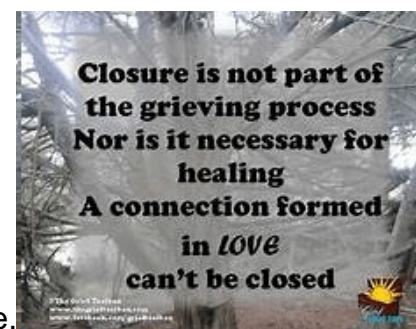
However, you know someone who has done this very thing after your life changed forever. Someone who let you hurt, permitted you to cry, didn't try to make it better, offered no clichés, and just listened. These people gave us hope; hope that, in the midst of our feelings of bleakness and despair, there is someone who figured out that they can't "fix it"; someone who knew what to do because they have walked a similar path or because they took the challenge to learn how to help. These rare people are precious humans who have been able to do what few have dared to do—they have stayed with you through your painful journey. Despite the fact that their brain has been pleading to reduce their pain and your pain, they resisted the strong temptation to use Defense Mechanisms.

When was the last time you really thanked this special person for all the many little acts of kindness they have done for you? It doesn't have to be a gift, or money, or a big kiss (but it could be). As you finish reading this article, ask yourself, "What little thing can I do for this wonderful person to convey how thankful I am?" Death has taught you that you don't have forever, that tomorrow is not guaranteed, and that people we care for can be taken from us in an instant. So, don't wait. Call, email, text, mail a card, or personally deliver a note. And when you do it, you can rest assured of one thing: your brain will thank you for it.

-- Bob Baugher

## Closure – A Misnomer

In the past few years, the non-bereaved seem to have won the battle, and it all came about as the result of someone discovering there is a word in the dictionary called "closure." What battle, you say? Those of us who have suffered the death of someone vital to our lives recognized the need for such a word. Not our word, surely, but the need for the non-bereaved, for, as Shakespeare once said, "Everyone can master grief but he that has it." It's difficult to have a day go by that someone doesn't insinuate, with seeming great



authority, that those of us who grieve and can't seem to put it all behind us, simply haven't put their hearts into achieving "closure." Bear in mind now, that's the same heart that has been broken, maybe many times over. Do these people who casually demand "closure" of us not realize that, like Humpty-Dumpty, "All the king's horses and all the king's men" couldn't put all the pieces together again?

Some people have been fortunate enough not to know that particular pain, but maybe those of us who do know that pain are more finely attuned to life's realities. The reality that says grief is not a simple set of stages, once accomplished, each stage goes away. Instead, some particular stages may visit you time and again. There is some truth in the old saying, "Time heals all wounds," but there is more truth in the simple knowledge that, with time, life does go on for those who grieve. The reality is life's cadence is never the same, for grief has a tempo of its own.

Understanding that the ones who haven't a clue, as the modern saying goes, are really more comfortable believing that closure is possible and that loss isn't really so bad. How can they know how it feels to have part of you amputated without the benefit of anesthesia? If I didn't know how it feels, I too would wish for it not to be so bad and would shy away from reality. My dictionary says closure is defined, in part, as "a finish; end." In the twenty years since my son died I know now that closure is not possible. Instead, his death has become a part of the fiber of my life. It is more accurate to say that I have learned to live with my loss more comfortably, but "finished; ended?" That's truly a misnomer.

-- Mary Cleckley CF Atlanta GA

## Who Am I?

Following the death of a young child everything changes. Probably the most significant changes that occur come from within the heart of a grieving parent. A parent will often feel so strangely different that the question will be asked time and time again, "Who am I?"

Obvious changes take place in the home when a child dies. Where there were four dinner plates at the table, there are now three. When riding in the car to run errands, one seat remains quiet and empty. There aren't as many jeans and dirty socks piled up in the laundry each week.

Grocery shopping becomes painfully different. In fact, it is almost unbearable to walk down the aisles

in the supermarket that contained all of the "favorites". Watching other parents with their children walking through the store choosing favorite snacks and school lunch foods becomes too painful to bear. No longer are the everyday routines of life "routine". Even looking at the cereal boxes in the cupboard brings a flood of salty tears.

Losing a young child changes so much! Even the way we see things is so very different. We notice more details now than before our child died. We notice things like hair color and the hair length of other children. We notice the color of other children's eyes, and we remember how many teeth they are missing when they smile. We pay attention to the way a child talks, and we notice such things as whether or not there is a lisp. Before our child died, we were so busy that these little things passed by totally unnoticed. Now, the big things don't seem to matter at all, and all of the small details in life become immensely important.

Grief changes a person in every way possible. Often, fathers who went about rushing to and from work hardly noticing anything else, now stop and stare at a butterfly and find themselves openly weeping. Many mothers who never worried about anything now find themselves to be overly protective, and they worry about every minute detail of the day. Grief places a different set of priorities on a parent's heart, and it also creates an unexplainable fear.

Following the death of a young child, a parent will often cry out in frustration asking, "Who am I? A parent in grief often reacts to others in open frustration and anger. Many parents say they withdraw from those who were their closest friends, alienating themselves from a much-needed support system. Grief brings about many new and different changes in a person!

Remember that eventually you will begin to enjoy life again. Little by little, the new you will begin to see joy in living. Your pain will not always remain so raw and open. Most of the time, grief brings about some very positive changes. You will have a different set of priorities, and many times the new you is more aware of what is really and truly important in this life.

Who am I? You are a person who has felt the pain of loss and who knows the joy of love. You are a person who has been forced into a place where you must make many difficult choices and changes. You are a person whose life is now governed by a heart that has felt immense pain and that makes you



acutely more aware of the pain in the lives of others.

Most of all, you are a parent. Just because your child no longer walks this earth does not mean you are not still a parent. Who am I? You are a parent who will always love your child!

-- Clara Hinton

## Hope Defined

“H”

TCF offers us help in learning how to heal when we don't know where to begin. TCF offers us a hand to hold when we feel lost and a reassuring hug when times are tough. TCF offers us an opportunity to be honest about our feelings without fear of judgment or censure. TCF shows us that happiness can again be possible as we move once again into life, honoring our children's memory as we go.



“O”

TCF gives us an opportunity to be open and forthright in expressing our deepest emotions. TCF gives us an outlet for our anger, frustration, and guilt. TCF provides ongoing outreach and support when those in our other support systems may have receded or disappeared altogether as our grief journey moves from days and weeks into months and years. TCF offers us a sense of optimism that life can be good again and that the intense pain of early grief will not last forever.

“P”

TCF helps us gain perspective on what we are experiencing, yet has the patience to listen to our story as many times as we need to tell it. TCF offers us a place where we may feel safe and protected as we share our pain and our memories. TCF offers us the promise of more inner peace as we move toward a place of remembering more about our children's life and dwelling less on the circumstances of the death. TCF helps us understand the need to pardon ourselves for any mistakes we may feel we made as parents and not to blame ourselves for our children's death.

“E”

TCF provides education about the grief process, so that we may better understand and cope with what is happening to us. TCF offers encouragement that our pain will not always be so great and that we

will survive. TCF members provide the true empathy that only those who have walked our path can know. TCF offers us a chance to express what is in our hearts and embraces us with understanding.

--Susan Chan, Topeka, KS, TCF Chapter

## Suicide: Changing the Way We Say It

Once in a while I write a post regarding the language of suicide. I really hope that people will read it because it is very important for us to spread the word on how we speak of suicide. I've been thinking about it a lot again lately, especially since the two-year anniversary of my stepson's suicide was just on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. And I wanted to share my thoughts in the hope that someone will read it and that that someone will also educate anyone, when given the chance, to help us with this mission to change how we say it:

SUICIDE: It is a death that has so many layers and agendas that it adds another whole level of difficulty to an already terrible loss. Using the word “committed” before suicide is like fingernails down a chalkboard to someone who has lost a loved one to suicide. We are trying to change the language around suicide and no longer say “committed” and I don't care for “completed” suicide myself (we wouldn't say that someone “completed” cancer or “completed” a car accident).

The reason that “committed” is a difficult term for the survivors left behind after a suicide has occurred is that “committed” generally indicates that what happened was a crime...from back in the Dark Ages when families were even imprisoned when a family member died of suicide (the stigma that still remains following a death by suicide is difficult enough and I pray one day there will be more understanding and education surrounding that as well).

Death by suicide occurs usually by a person who is in so much pain emotionally and sometimes physically that they see that as the only option left to end that unbearable pain. And they truly believe in their heart that they are helping their families by leaving this world...that their loved ones are better off without them. It is not the “coward's way out”...it is a pain that those of us without that level of hopelessness and darkness cannot begin to comprehend. Died “by” suicide. Died “of” suicide. Died “as a result of” suicide. Died “from” suicide. “Lost to” suicide; and even “took their own life” (because that is a reality)...but, please, never “committed”. Help those who have suffered this

unthinkable loss by changing the way you and others say it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for reading this.

--Cathy Seehuedder, TCF/St. Paul MN

## The Love You Bring

I looked toward the clouds today and for a moment saw your face

And wondered just where you have gone with the hope it's a peaceful place

Did you show yourself to me today to tell me you're all right?

Or was it just a daydream playing tricks upon my sight

Then I thought of when you left still too young to say a word

Yet the look you gave us said it all in our hearts, your good-bye was heard

You have changed our lives forever your short time here not in vain

and hope you know we tried it all to keep you safe from pain

We will always feel the void inside because you are not here

But each new thought you send our way let's us know you're always near

So until our journey nears its end and we hear the Angels sing

We'll face each new day as it comes and live off the Love you bring.

--By James Sullivan

## Seasoned Greivers...

### Autumn

Autumn has always been a time of nostalgia for me. The days are noticeably shorter with daytime temperatures beginning to cool down and the slightest chilliness of beautiful star filled evenings requiring a sweatshirt or sweater. Early morning streets are filled with children going back to school. Most everyone is finally back to work, relaxed and sharing the adventures and experiences of summer vacations. And then one day, there is a wind from the west. And just by its feel you know these are the last days of summer and that fall will soon gently ease itself into our Rocky Mountains. Before we know it, the canyons are blazing with the fire of fall



color working its way down into our valley.

It is a beautiful season and perhaps my favorite time of the year. We can sit for hours in Sugar House Park, watching the birds gather and head south for the winter and enjoy the trees now fully aflame with oranges, browns and reds so beautiful it can make our hearts sing with joy. And yet, with all the beauty that surrounds us, we as bereaved parents sometimes struggle to let it all in. For as summer wanes, and fall begins, our thoughts naturally turn to grammar school homework, high school parties and dances, college football games, shopping for new clothes, and the specter of holidays ahead without those of our children who have too soon been taken from us.

It is difficult to write about this just today. I just went to a wedding of my closest friends' son, where Jacob's cousins, nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters and past friends all came together for three days of reunion and celebrations filled with stories of the past. On Sunday, over thirty people were at my place sharing enchiladas and childhood memories of those years we were all together. And of course, the occasional, "I wish Jake were here to see this." For me, not an hour went by that I did not think of him or see his face in his young nephew who bears his name. And yet ... and yet the season, the color, the beautiful days and evenings, the weddings, the parties and football games, and the eminent holidays now fill me with thanksgiving that Jake was part of my life for sixteen years. No small thing that. I consider myself lucky for that much time, for I know so many friends who had much less time with their beloved children.

So this year, I choose to find the good and the beautiful of the season, and let the holidays come. For, it is in remembering his face and the goodness of his life and the beauty of the season, that I find sweet healing for my grieving soul.

Very soon now, autumn and the harvest season will be upon us, and the bounty of summer's growth will begin to fill our barns and sheds. And this will be an opportunity for us, even though we grieve, to discover the rich harvest of memories with those of our lost children. In their season, they provided us with a bounty of their own. If we are able to accept it, this can be a fall season where we reflect on their abundance of smiles, laughter, humor, growth, learning, and sharing of love. God how we loved them, and how they loved us. Even through all the difficulties, the energetic exchanges of opinions and ideas, the heartaches, the tears, anxiety and

disappointments, we cannot avoid the fact that we loved them with a measure beyond our comprehension. And in spite of the difficult times, their sweet and sometimes very short lives provided us with an abundant harvest of experiences that are able, if we let them, to bless us with healing memories to last for as long as we live.

So as we say goodbye to summer, as best we can, let us welcome the fall season and the coming holidays and all the beauty these seasons can and will bring to us. I fully realize that for those of us most recently bereaved, this will be difficult, and in our sorrow and grief, seem perhaps almost impossible. Please let me reach out my hand and my heart to you in the quiet of your reading this right now.

If you can, imagine I am looking right into your eyes with all the compassion I can muster. And in that moment, I will share your tears, your agony of loss, and your grief, for I am truly one of you. I am after all, and have been a Compassionate Friend for over eleven years now. And as we share this moment, please hear the warmest feelings of my heart as I say to you this wretched agony of grief, this painful time of suffering, and this nightmare and horror you now feel will pass. At some point I promise you will begin to experience the light at the end of this painful tunnel of grief. I promise you will have summers and falls and holidays to come filled with healing memories of your children.

I promise as Halloween comes, and you are finally able to turn your porch light on to welcome trick-or-treaters, you will see your own children in the bright and joyful faces at your front door, and smile and be glad they once blessed your life. I also promise the time will come when you will move past Halloween and look forward to Thanksgiving and the December holidays.

As I wrote earlier, I realize this may be too soon for some of you. All I ask is that you be willing to let these most difficult times pass – as I have promised they will, and allow your hearts to soften and show you their rich places where you still love your children. For it is in those painful, tender places you will begin to find the abundance of love given to you by your children which will bring healing. And when that happens, you will look forward to Thanksgiving day with its abundantly filled table, and realize an

equally abundant harvest of the heart.

Whenever we are able to accept it and embrace it, the grace of healing will come to all of us. Of course our lives will never be the same. We will always have the sadness of their absence in our lives and experience those frequent bitter-sweet times when we simply miss them. But the dark pain and suffering of their passing will itself pass – this I can promise you. For in these past eleven years I have looked into every dark and secret corner of grief, and have spent with you, all those endless weeks and months of intense pain and tears.

I have shared those endless days of self recrimination and regret and anger. And in all this I have finally found the autumn of my healing, and I have feasted in the abundant harvest of love. Yes indeed, I promise you the light of joyful memory at the end of this dark tunnel.

So may you look forward to the fall and all its beauty and grace, and anticipate the holidays' peace and joy with a sure knowledge that this present darkness will pass, and that your life will once again be able to embrace the abundance of harvest enjoyed by the rest of your family and friends. And along with Rabbi Harold Kushner, who wrote the book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, be able to say as he did of his own son's life and death, "... I think of Aaron and all that his

life taught me, and I realize how much I have lost and how much I have gained. Yesterday seems less painful, and I am not afraid of tomorrow."

-- Erin Silva erinsilva@earthlink.net  
TCF, Salt Lake City, Utah



## Newly Bereaved...

### Getting The Love Back In Your Life

Every year I like to take a survey of where I stand on my love meter. Am I on the high or the low side this year? How is my relationship with my husband, Phil? With my daughters and their families? Is there any misunderstanding or disagreement with a dear friend or colleague that still

needs some attention? I take a quick inventory.

Inevitably, thinking about the people I love takes me hurtling back in time to what I call my “Ground Zero.” For me, that was in April 1983, when my 17-year-old son, Scott, was killed in an automobile accident. That boy was the love of my life. After his death, I wondered if I would ever be happy again.

Your “Ground Zero” may not only be the loss of a loved one; dealing with any big loss takes time. Afterward, you may find, as so many of us have, that doing even the most routine chore can utterly besiege your heart.

After Scott’s death, one of the activities I found most painful was going to the grocery store. The first time I went shopping, I just tossed things into the grocery cart without much thought, avoiding people I knew as they avoided me. (Most people still don’t have a clue about what to say to a bereaved mother.) “The task to be done today,” I told myself, “is to push cart, place items in cart, and get out as soon as possible.”

I was confident that, by sheer force, I could get this job done. When I got to the dairy counter, I selected eggs and milk and then tossed in ten cartons of banana yogurt. I trudged to the checkout counter, relieved to have another task under my belt.

Several days later, I opened the refrigerator and my eyes locked on those ten cartons of banana yogurt. I was stunned. Tears welled up and trickled down my face as the reality hit. Scott was the only one in the family who ate banana yogurt. I quickly tossed the cartons into the garbage and made a note to cross it off my grocery list.

On my second trip, I labored again through the supermarket aisles in a fog. When I noticed a vaguely familiar face staring at me across the produce counter, I quickly turned and pushed my cart to a distant corner of the store. After collecting myself, I began shopping again. I selected some cottage cheese in the dairy section and looked sadly at the banana yogurt, feeling a wave of grief. My eyes began to tear up. I longed to put just one or two cartons in my cart.

For weeks, whenever I opened the refrigerator, I felt an empty pit in my stomach as I looked at the second shelf, which no longer held those little containers displaying a jolly little yellow banana.

On my third trip to the grocery store, parking and shopping seemed to be a bit easier. I even managed to pick up a couple of containers of

strawberry yogurt, which I knew Heather, Scott’s 14-year-old sister, loved. By the fourth trip, I found that food shopping had become another routine that I had mastered as a part of my changed life.

Now, more than two decades later, I smile just thinking about my boy and how he lived, not how he died. He was amazing—so smart, so easygoing, so fun-loving, and so strong. I remember how he used to carry four grocery bags at a time for me from the car into the house. Now I have to make four trips.

Like my experience with banana yogurt, some of your “firsts” will become routine during the first year. But many others, including the first day of school, the first holidays, the first spring, the first birthday, the first death day, can take years. Some events happen only once in a lifetime, like a wedding or a graduation. Facing these events and milestones takes persistence and courage, but eventually, they will begin to feel more routine. By “routine,” I mean that we develop new brain patterns so we don’t have to think so much about a task or an action that had previously been second nature. After a major loss, we are again like newborns. We have to learn to crawl before we can walk.

Where am I today on my love meter? I am pleased to say that I am on the high side this year. Take a look at your life and relationships. Where do you stand? Where you are in relation to your “Ground Zero”?

Give yourself a boost and look for areas where you can bring more love and joy into your life. Start with taking care of yourself. Ask yourself the following questions:

Am I pushing others away?

Do I put myself out for others? Remember: You get what you put out there.

Hugs, get more hugs.

Kindness begins by being kind to you. Start by giving yourself a rose, then give others a rose.

Positive energy attracts—negative rejects.

In the end, you are responsible for your own experience.

Do:

Give yourself a treat— a bubble bath, a haircut, download some new music or join a gym.

Reach out and make a new friend or get in touch with an old friend.

Be a mentor.

Facebook or Twitter a happy message.

Write a happy note on someone else’s blog.

But most of all, be the friend to yourself that you





have always wanted.

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Make it count.

--Gloria Horsley Posted on February 2nd, 2021

Dr. Gloria Horsley is an internationally known grief expert, psychotherapist, and bereaved parent. She started "Open to Hope" to help the millions in the world with grief.

Author's Website: <http://www.opentohope.com>

## Friends and Family...



### A Poem for My Friends

I asked you not to grieve with me  
 For my loss you cannot know.  
 And please don't tell me how you understand  
 But this is just how some things go.  
 I ask you not to know my pain  
 Or tell me it was God's will.  
 And please don't tell me how another child  
 Will my ache and my need fulfill.  
 There are times when words are void of meaning  
 There is nothing that anyone can say.  
 Just hold my hand and sit with me  
 Till I can cope in a better way.  
 Pray for me and the child we lost  
 Help me believe in a better day.  
 Help me to hope and to somehow know  
 I'll survive this all some way.  
 And when I mention Lindsay's name  
 Please try not to look ashamed.  
 For I loved her more than life itself  
 And I will always speak her name.  
 Do not tell me it should be over now  
 And we cannot change the past.  
 You cannot understand, my friend,  
 This grief does not leave when asked!  
 Just bear with me, in my grief  
 And the turmoil of my mind.  
 And pray that on some future day  
 I'll not comfort you in kind.

--Corry Roach TCF, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

## Welcome...

### To One in Sorrow

Let me come in where you are weeping, friend,  
 And let me take your hand.  
 I, who have known a sorrow such as yours.  
 Can understand.

Let me come in--I would be very still  
 Beside you in your grief.  
 I would not bid you cease your weeping, friend,  
 Tears bring relief.

Let me come in--I would only breathe a prayer  
 And hold your hand.  
 For I have known a sorrow such as yours,  
 And understand.

--Grace Noll Crowell

Editor's Note: The South Bay/L.A. Chapter of TCF wants to assist you in your grief. Being surrounded by other bereaved parents who can offer advice and model that it is possible to survive the pain of losing a child, is helpful to many. We invite you to join us at the next meeting.

### Helpful Hint...



The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly, and at times, imperceptibly.  
 Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died.  
 Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past.  
 Try to strike a delicate balance  
 between a yesterday that should be remembered  
 and a tomorrow that must be created.  
 -- Author Unknown

### Book Review...



*Beyond Tears: Living After Losing A Child.* Revised edition with a brand-new chapter written by young adults. Nine mother's who lost a child and met in a support group give comfort and direction to bereaved parents. They candidly share with other grieving parents what to expect in the first year and long beyond. Author's include: Phyllis, Levine, Long, Rita, Volpe, Coletti, Goldstein, Cohenm, Barkin and Eisenberg.

Life will not go on in the same way  
 without your child.  
 If it were the same,  
 we could only conclude that child's life meant  
 nothing, made no contribution.  
 The fact that your child  
 left behind a place that cannot be filled  
 is a high tribute to the uniqueness of your child.  
 --author unknown

## Time Will Ease The Hurt

The sadness of the present days  
Is locked and set in time,  
And moving to the future  
Is a slow and painful climb.  
But all the feelings that are now  
So vivid and so real  
Can't hold their fresh intensity  
As time begins to heal.  
No wound so deep will ever go  
Entirely away,  
Yet even hurt becomes  
A little less from day to day.  
Nothing can erase the painful  
Imprints on your mind,  
But there are softer memories  
That time will let you find.  
Though your heart won't let the  
Sadness simply slide away.  
The echoes will diminish  
Even though the memories stay.  
--Bruce B. Wilmer

## The Butterfly

As love falls down from the sky,  
It lands on the wings of a butterfly.  
The butterfly sings its songs and rhymes  
And flies through the air,  
No concept of time.  
It is the messenger of patience and change,  
From flower to flower, it's odd, and it's strange.  
The butterfly can transform its world,  
And give way to new beginnings, unfurled.  
It is the keeper of transformation,  
And flies on faith and imagination.  
The butterfly has no fear of change,  
It bravely escapes it's homemade cage.  
To change, it knows is necessary,  
For all the burdens we need not carry,  
The butterfly soars and merrily sings,  
For without change,  
It could never grow wings.  
--Heather Renee Adamkiewicz



## Grief Is A Solitary Journey

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

life 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 the 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 Sterner Rice

## Men Do Cry

I heard quite often "men don't cry"  
Though no one ever told me why  
So when I fell and skinned a knee  
No one came to comfort me.  
And when some bully boy at school  
Would pull a prank so mean or cruel  
I'd quickly learn to turn and quip  
"It doesn't hurt" and bite my lip.  
So as I grew to reasoned years  
I learned to stifle any tears.  
Though "Be a big boy" it began  
Quite soon I learned to "Be a man."  
And I could play that stoic role  
While storm and tempest wracked my soul.  
No pain nor setback could there be  
Could wrest one single tear from me  
Then one long night I stood nearby  
And helplessly watched my son die  
And quickly found to my surprise  
That all tearless talk was lies.  
And still I cry and have no shame  
I cannot play that "big boy" game.  
And openly without remorse  
I let my sorrow take its course.  
So those of you who can't abide  
A man you've seen who's often cried  
Reach out to him with all your heart  
As one whose life's been torn apart.  
For men do cry when they can see  
Their loss of immortality.  
And tears will come in endless streams  
When mindless fate destroys their dreams.  
--Ken Falk TCF, NW Connecticut Chapter

"Walk the grief journey slowly and carefully  
but bring some of your child's joy for  
life with you."  
--Meg Avery



# 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

Cheianne 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 Lulhere  
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96  
Parents: Larry & Chris Lulhere

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 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 Murphy  
Born: 5/92 Died: 3/18  
Mother: Deborah Murphy

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

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

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

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

Parents: Alexandar &  
Sanderson  
Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

## 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.)

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

Sorry, no birthday tributes were received this month

## For Siblings...



### The Measure of a Mann

Have you ever seen a movie where one of the main characters dies in the middle? Right as you are getting into the best part, after the introductions, when you feel like you know the characters and you've started, often subconsciously, to develop possible endings in your head for how things will go? It isn't common.

If my life were a movie, it is just reaching its climax. The majority of main characters are already in the picture, and there is some idea of what path I am headed on and where life will take me. There are things to look forward to in my predicted ending, grad school, a wedding, a career and a family. All things I would do with my brother as he enjoyed the same successes. Well, that was the plan. My brother, Michael Waite Mann, was 25 when he passed away unexpectedly at the end of last February. Who wouldn't turn off that movie, who wants to watch something with such an abrupt transition from a comedic drama to a tragedy? This isn't a film I can turn off. It is my life and I have no choice other than to continue, so I will do the best I can and take comfort in knowing that he is always watching.

Michael was my co-star. Him being my big brother was a given, but him being my best friend and my confidant, that was an added bonus. I know that all of you know the feeling of trying with all of your being to describe your lost loved child, sibling or grandchild, and you will understand what I mean when I say that words simply fail. I cannot fit Michael onto this page. I cannot tell you what he means to me, or share all of the stories that I think can shine a bit of light onto how wonderful he was.

But, maybe that's not such a bad thing. Maybe the fact that I can't describe him, that I can't put it into words, is a testament to how truly amazing he was and how special our relationship was. So as for Michael, I will leave it at that. He was an amazing individual, someone I looked up to so greatly, someone who's every word and opinion I cherished, someone with whom I shared an indescribable bond, and someone who I am incredibly blessed to call my big brother.

Since Michael passed, so many people have told me that they've never known siblings as close as Michael and I, and some have asked me how we got so close. I've spent some time thinking about that question. It wasn't because we were so similar, because we have always been very different. It wasn't because we always got along, and it didn't mean we didn't fight growing up. It is a direct reflection of what phenomenal parents we have.

As different as Michael and I were, one common thread is that we have always known how fortunate we are to have the parents that we do. Michael and I wouldn't have known the value of such support and consideration if they had not led by example – at every meet, every game, calling just to say hi and see how things were going. My parents continue to lead by example. They are steadfast in their ways of honoring Michael, pushing through, carrying each other and me.

To my parents: when you look at me and wish I didn't hurt like I do – don't. That would mean that Michael and I wouldn't have had the relationship that we did. That relationship was the most amazing gift in the world. The depth of my grief is one measure of the man Michael was. The strength that I have comes from you. Thank you for all that you do and for keeping me going in the worst days of my life. I am so grateful to have the two of you and know that Michael would be proud of us for sticking together, though he would expect nothing less.

People say I am early in my grief to be taking on the task of newsletter editor, and I am, but Michael encouraged me in all that I did, and I know that his heart would break at the thought of me not challenging myself to accomplish more. So on the hardest days I keep pushing, for him. Knowing I'm living with two hearts means I will live this life with twice the passion, twice the courage and twice the love. Twice the drive, twice the motivation and twice the compassion will allow me to accomplish twice the dreams, his and mine, and I will do it all in his honor. I hope he enjoys the show.

--By Meredith Mann

## From When to Now

When you left my heart was broken, for all of the words that were left unspoken.  
 When you left I thought my life was at its end.  
 I began to not only miss the past but the future with all of the love and time we would spend.  
 When you left my life changed forever; as my brother we was supposed to grow old together.  
 Now that you're gone, as hard as it might be, I know that life must go on.  
 You're in my heart and mind everyday.  
 I often see things and smile at what you would say.  
 And then with a heavy heart and weak smile, attempt to get through the day.  
 As my faith in God remains rooted and grounded, I understand now that the Lord has a plan for you that couldn't be ousted.  
 Now that you're gone I thank the Lord daily for allowing me to be your sis.  
 The short time we had together was filled with love, joy and bliss.  
 When you left I was broken and weak.  
 Now that you're gone, through your love and memories I have the strength to speak.  
 I speak of my love and how much I miss you.  
 I keep you alive with every tear and smile I have when I think of you.  
 When you left you were my brother and friend.  
 Now that you're gone, I'll wait patiently until I see you again.  
 --Tanya Boudreaux      Sister of Richard Wilson



## For Grandparents...

### Someone Stole Our Joy Today

Someone stole our joy today  
 and left a lot of pain  
 They took away the sunshine  
 and left a world of rain.  
 The hope that filled our world  
 Just crumbled into dust.  
 Now we must face a broken heart  
 In what we used to trust.  
 The warmest smile we ever knew  
 Lit up that little face.  
 How can we go on living  
 In this cold and lonely place.  
 And now he is with Jesus  
 Our angel is up above.  
 He left us all so suddenly  
 And took with him our love.  
 The only hope there is today

Is one day we will be.  
 Together in that glorious place  
 For all eternity.  
 --written by Grandma Irene

## From Our Members...



### Side By Side

At the time of Aaron's death, Paul and I had been married 16 years. In that time we had the usual reconcilable differences as well as an allotted portion of hard-ships, which we had faced and endured together. Until our son's death ripped us asunder, there had been no blow that we, as a couple, could not withstand. It was in the very early days of our sorrow that Paul and I first became aware that this journey would be made, in many ways, separately. What we did not know was that we, who had been blessed in union, would grow as a couple as we each grew in respect for the individual strengths of the other.

In order for Paul to make it through those first horrible months, it was necessary that he sift through the facts of Aaron's death. Trying to make sense of a senseless tragedy, he attempted to fit all the pieces together as if solving a puzzle. Toward this end, he acquired and studied the reports done by both the police and Medical Examiner, attempting to share this information with me. I was horrified. I did not want to know how far my son's body was thrown, nor did I care that one shoe was found 75 feet from the other. Paul was struggling then with what tortured me two years later. Aaron, running for his life, arms pumping in the swiftly brightening glare of approaching headlights.

What we have learned to do is to allow one another time and space to grieve. While this statement does not possess a profound ring, I believe it to be the single most important decision we have ever made as a couple.

We, who had shared Aaron's birth and all his life, found his death, a shared burden. Something we have each had to bear alone. When, nearing two years beyond his death, my mind became a theater from hell in which scenes of Aaron's death continually played. I reached out to my partner for help. And my partner, struggling to stay afloat, said to me, "I don't want to hear that, Frankie." It's what I saw every time I closed my eyes for SIX months after Aaron died. Immediately, I had recall of his contest with those vivid pictures, and I understood his statement of self-preservation was not an act of rejection. I found others who could bear to hear the

terrible things I had to say. I endured.

Recently, Paul and I had occasion to lie out on the pier at the lake in which we spread the ashes of our son. Side by side we were, heads touching, but bodies aimed in opposite directions. We really didn't have much to say. It was enough that we had reached this place together.

During these past three years, each of us has sat in the darkness alone, while the other, trusted companion and intimate friend, slept on unaware. I have read that we are to bear one another's burdens, and to comfort with the comfort which we have been given. I understand now that these words were written for those who have suffered and survived. We cannot give away what we have not acquired for ourselves.

Though we have not been given the luxury of growing complacent in our marriage, this experience has resulted in the gift of a deeper intimacy. I have acquired a greater awareness and appreciation for the love and support Paul offers me, as well as that which only I can give myself. In choosing to respect our difference, we have embraced strengths we had not even known existed. Standing apart, we found that we could move onward together, alone. Alone, together.

--Frankie Wilford TCF Carrollton, TX  
Submitted by Linda Curtis

Do you have a favorite article, 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 **LAST** Zoom meeting on Thursday, Sept. 1st @ 7:00 p.m.

We encourage you to attend the in-person meetings at The Neighborhood Church. We send out emails reminders to our members with invitation information. Email us to be added to that list. You can contact the Zoom hosts, Leo & Connie Licciardone at (310) 283-6739 or [Conniestar58@gmail.com](mailto:Conniestar58@gmail.com), or Leo at [Liccica79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccica79@gmail.com). We want give a big Thank You to Connie & Leo for hosting the Zoom meeting until we were able to return to The Neighborhood Church.

**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: Sept. 1st for Oct. birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 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 she 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...

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofselfharm.com	alivelone.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](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. When making a donation, please make checks payable to The South Bay/L.A. chapter.

Mail to: The South Bay/LA chapter of Compassionate Friends  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance CA 90510

In loving memory of Danielle Mosher, August 1978 - June 1997. Who I miss every day and pray for.  
Love, Grandma Nelson

In loving memory of Mark Scott Galper, February 1962 - May 1972  
Love, Mom

In loving memory of Danielle Mosher, August 1978 - June 1997. Keeping her in my prayers and is dearly missed.  
Love, Grandma Nelson

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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

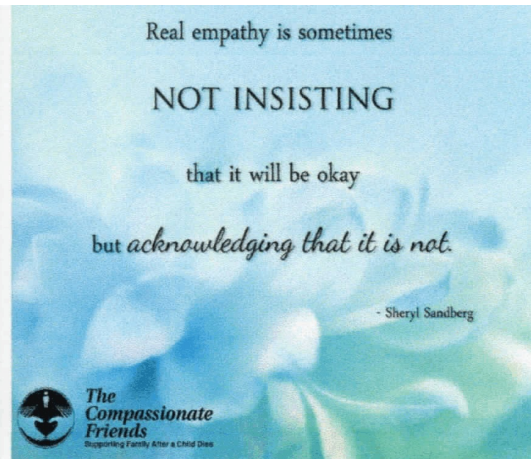
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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

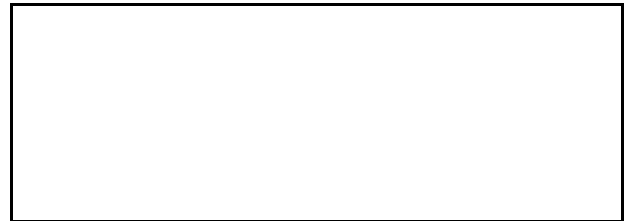
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– Return Service Requested –



**September 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.