



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Oct. 2021 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be **October 6th**, 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.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171
(310) 963-4646
www.tcfsbla.org

The Wed., Oct. 6th meeting will start with "My Grief Mask"

"Flash Zoom" meetings are now available. Contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 to join.

The **TCF Sharing group** takes place at Hoff's Hut's outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237th 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, Oct 6th meeting will start with " My Grief Mask " Masks are not just for Halloween. As bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents we don masks year round. We often try to present to the world what we think is expected of us. Sometimes it is easier to act as if we are living in a "normal" world than it is to risk other's impatience with our grieving. Sometimes we want to grieve in private but life expectancies force us into society's regime. While putting on a mask at times is easier, sometimes it also makes it harder. This month we will start the meeting by examining who, what, where and why we put on our mask just to face our everyday lives as bereaved parents. Please join us and share your insights about your own masks.

The Mask Of Grief

As the beautiful colors of Fall surround us and the air is sweetened and chilled, we, the broken hearted parents and families of those children who left us too soon begin to find the strength and perseverance to face another season, another anniversary, another rush of memories. Perhaps Halloween brings with it visions of little candy grabbing goblins and gossamer clad fairy children. Perhaps those memories aren't available to some of us. All of us pick up our masks right around this time of year and we put them on. Our masks are different, though. When our children died, we discovered that the raw and horrible pain we were in probably showed up on our faces, in the way we stood, in the way we walked and talked. We soon discovered that, even though we had many close and loving friends and family, they were not very comfortable with watching us bleed to death from the inside out... So we constructed a mask.

Masquerade Balls and Pagan ceremonies goes really well with us because it is a relief to hide our hurt behind them. Don't you agree? I heard someone tell me after Greg died, "It's hard to watch you and talk to you because your eyes show so much hurt." I thought about wearing shades even in the winter.

Well, what do you think? The way I see it, all survivors deserve an Energizer Bunny costume this Halloween. We'd like to hide behind the sunglasses and have people listen to our steady drumbeat of wishes, but most of all, we have kept going, and



going... The worst hurt imagined has invaded our lives, crushing our spirits, and yet we still have kept going and going! I'm proud of each of you. Move over, little stuffed pink and white bunny. Take a look at us. Our lives aren't a whimsical commercial. We are living your slogan and ancient rituals. The idea of "masking" one's identity for a short time and celebrating with wild abandon is as appealing in our society as it was in those ancient times.

Unfortunately, the bereaved have a different reason for donning the mask. We force our mask to smile when the lump in our throat and the heaviness in our chest threaten to choke us. Our eyes leak profusely, despite the waterproof mascara and pancake makeup we women keep applying... Men put on a stoic and strong facade, sometimes failing miserably and breaking down with terrible beauty.

I urge you to be gentle with your mask. Put it on thoughtfully and take it off with great care. There are safe places to leave it and one of those places is with those of us who travel this path with you.

--Kerry Marston, Mother of Michael
Bereaved Parents USA, St. Louis Chapter
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Please Hear What I'm Not Saying

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear,

For I wear a mask, a thousand masks,
Masks that I'm afraid to take off, and none of them is me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me,
But don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled.

I give you the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me,

Within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness my game,

That the water's calm and I'm in command
and that I need no one,

But don't believe me. Please. My surface may seem smooth

But my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask.

Beneath lies no complacence. Beneath lies the real me in confusion,

In fear, in aloneness. But I hide this.

I don't want anybody to know it.

I panic at the thought of my weakness exposed.

That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
A nonchalant sophisticated facade, to help me pretend,

To shield me from the glance that knows.
 But such a glance is precisely my salvation, my only
 salvation,
 And I know it.
 That is, if it's followed by acceptance,
 if it's followed by love.
 It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself,
 From my own self-built prison wall,
 From the barriers I so painstakingly erect.
 It's the only thing that will assure me
 of what I can't assure myself,
 that I'm really worth something.
 But I don't tell you this. I don't dare to. I'm afraid to.
 I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by
 acceptance and love.
 I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh,
 And your laugh would kill me.
 I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing, that I'm just
 no good, and that you will see this and reject me.
 So I play my game, my desperate pretending game,
 With a facade of assurance without and a trembling
 child within.
 And so begins the parade of masks,
 The glittering but empty parade of masks,
 And my life becomes a front.
 I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface
 talk.
 I tell you everything that's really nothing,
 And nothing of what's everything, of what's crying
 within me.
 So when I'm going through my routine,
 Do not be fooled by what I'm saying.
 Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not
 saying.
 -- From the Compassionate Friend Victoria
 newsletter, TCF Queensland, Australia (Barbara's
 version)

Dancing In The Rain

The words "it is what it is" continually run through my mind. Our worlds don't often turn out as we imagined. My handsome prince didn't whisk me off to a beautiful castle where he treated me like a queen. We didn't have four beautiful, healthy children or live happily ever after. In fact, my life journey hasn't been at all like I had imagined, with the exception of one beautiful daughter, Kyra.

I was only six months into my grief when I attended The Compassionate Friends national



conference in Boston. I remember grudgingly agreeing to attend a workshop titled "Another Day, Another Opportunity." I thought, I don't want to go to that one, because at the time, another day was just another opportunity to feel great pain and anguish. But something was pulling me to attend the session, so I went and was so grateful that I did, because it has helped me to find a new goal.

One of the most memorable things the workshop presenter said was that until we are able to let go of our child's physical death, we cannot embrace their spiritual essence. It has been four years since Kyra's death and I can now say that the farther I walk from her death, the closer I feel to her. The pain is still evident, but to feel her presence again is wonderful. I first felt it on the beach at Cape Elizabeth in Maine. I felt her spirit cry out, "I am free! Come and dance with me."

Kyra loved to dance. The country music song, "I Hope You Dance," was released before she died. I told Kyra that I dedicated it to her and gave her a plaque with the words inscribed on wood. The words in the song speak of not giving up when life becomes hard. I thought then that I had gotten it for her, when actually I think it was meant for me and other bereaved parents.

The word dance seems to be etched into my mind. Recently, a friend shared a quote she had come across: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass ... It's about learning to dance in the rain."

Wow – what awesome words! The image of a storm is a good analogy in understanding our grief. Storms can come from nowhere, like a tornado, seemingly destroying everything in their path and leaving our lives in complete and utter shambles. The darkness and dreariness stay while lightning continues to flash, stabbing our hearts with pain. Thunder clamors constantly, reminding us that our children are gone. We can walk in fog for what seems like years as the sleet and frigid cold freeze us in our tracks. The wind howls, imitating our screams and wailing. The rain seems to be endless.

Others, who haven't lost their children, who are living in sunshine, cry out to us, "Come in out of the rain." They don't understand that often we're just not able to move. The storm has become our world, for however long we need or choose to live there.

My own experience of grief tells me that our lives will always be stormier than they were before the hurricanes came and took what was most precious to us. But, we do have a choice. We can stay hunkered down under the false protection of denial.

We can lock ourselves up in a protective shell and never come out. Or, we can learn to dance in the rain. However, each bereaved parent must decide what feels best to them. I find myself thinking, "It's hard to crawl, walk or breathe without her and she wants me to dance?! She must have forgotten all those times I tried and she said, "Mom you can't dance!" Then I realize that she's not referring to my ability when I hear, Dance, mom, dance! Dance in the rain. Dance because you can't change what has already been done. You have the choice to sit it out or dance. Listen for the music, keep your eyes wide open, go forward, follow the music and dance. Follow me. I am not behind you. I am in front of you. I'm free and I am dancing.

She taught me to hear the music and her song continues on. Without it, I couldn't dance. I believe if we allow our children to lead us to dance in the rain, they will eventually dance us out of the severe storms of pain and into the sunshine of peace. "And when the skies are gray because I went away, Put on your dancing shoes, grab your umbrella, and dance"

--Julie Short, TCF Southeastern Illinois.

Re-embracing Halloween After a Loss

The candy you buy at the drugstore may now be just for you, the lights turned off for trick-or-treaters on Halloween. You may want to go through the neighborhood late at night and tear down all the ghastly tombstone decorations and leave notes reminding neighbors that death is not "fun." The cheap hanging ghosts may feel like mockeries of your own constant search for signs of spirit in butterflies, rainbows, or in my case, pennies. And costume contests are probably way down on your list of priorities.

After experiencing the death of a loved one, Halloween may feel too raw to celebrate. Perhaps you are grieving the loss of the little sweetheart you took trick-or-treating, or maybe you feel like nurses' costumes are no longer so cute after spending long nights beside a hospital bed... Yet despite the silly ways that most people celebrate Halloween, there is a common yearning to look inward and to the spirit world as the days grow shorter and nature goes to sleep for winter. As the light fades outside there is a call to embrace our homes with light, with jack-o-



lanterns, and later in the season Christmas lights. Actively remembering your loved ones helps bring the light within to warm you through the cold season. With the approaching winter holidays perhaps bringing dread and stress, Halloween can be a time solely to remember your loved one and celebrate the memories and life you shared together.

Many cultures honor and remember the dead in the days and weeks around Halloween, with Dia de los Muertos in Latin American countries, All Souls' Day with many Christian communities, or Jewish holidays of harvest and Yom Kippur. Even Halloween, the "ugly American" of remembrance holidays, originally had a more sacred meaning, and became more of a play day for children only in recent decades.

Judy's daughter, Stacy, died of an overdose at the age of 23. Stacy always loved decorating the house for Halloween, and even into her teen years would stay home with her mom to pass out candy to neighborhood trick-or-treaters. After her death, Judy avoided anything associated with Halloween. She would see a cute witch decoration in the grocery store and break down in tears missing Stacy.

Judy felt there was no point in celebrating Halloween anymore. She called in sick to work the first year after Stacy's death on Halloween, and after crying and looking at photos of Stacy, she suddenly felt inspired to plant some bulbs she'd been storing in her garage. She went into the yard and immediately felt energized, working with the earth and planting. She'd forgotten about them by Spring, and was surprised when she went outside on Stacy's birthday and found the whole yard filled with blooming irises, Stacy's favorite flower. She now spends every Halloween remembering Stacy as she plants, and it reminds her that beauty continues despite her loss. You too can reclaim the original intention of the season by participating in or creating your own ritual of memory.

Your new ritual can be as simple as:

- Light a candle for your loved one.
- Read aloud a favorite poem, or passage from a book.
- Even reenact a scene from your loved one's favorite movie with family and friends.
- Cook your loved one's favorite dish to share with friends.
- Play a game or do an activity your loved one enjoyed. Sometimes after a loss families stop

playing together. Halloween can be a time to resume activities you used to enjoy with your loved one, and embrace the sadness and warmth.

- Gather with supportive people at your loved one's grave to leave flowers, candy, or small tokens. On Dia de los Muertos, families host elaborate picnics at cemeteries, finding community in simply caring for the final resting place of loved ones.

Remember that your ritual can be utterly simple or an elaborate celebration with friends and family. The important thing is to remember your loved one in a way that feels healing to you. Something is reproduced in your memory through these rituals that transcends the ordinary experience of existence. Keeping the person in our thoughts in a conscious and meaningful way brings him or her closer to us, and can be very healing.

--Gloria Horsley The Open to Hope Foundation
opentohope.com

From The Desk Of Father Rubey

As people grieve a death from suicide, two effects of the death have to be struggled with and have to be resolved. The first one is the change that will come over one. The loved one's suicide has created a gaping-hole and void in one's life and one's family. This dramatic act has caused significant change in one's life. No matter who has died, there is a change in the system. If one has lost a spouse, one has to get used to being without a spouse and possibly being a single parent. If one has lost a parent, the survivor struggles with not having this parent. If one has lost a child, the parent struggles with going from being a parent of three children, to having two children and so on.

The issue is, that survivors have to come to grips with the change that has come over them with this suicide. Each and every suicide creates change in the lives of those survivors. The system that one lived in prior to the suicide has now been forever changed. What one was used to has now been altered permanently. It takes some time to allow the change to register and become part of one's everyday life. Be patient with this change and allow it to unfold gradually. You can't race through it. Let it unfold in its own time.

The other effect of a loss from suicide is to come to grips with the feeling of abandonment. Your loved one has suddenly left your life without permission. There might have been warnings or signals, and maybe there were no warnings or signals. The fact

is that a loved one has "abandoned" you. Survivors are left to pick up the pieces of widowhood, of feeling like a "bad parent", an "unloving child", or an "uncaring sibling". Whatever the relationship was, there is the feeling of being abandoned. No one deserves to be abandoned, but a suicide can result in such feelings.

Did the person mean to abandon his/her family? Absolutely not. This loved one could no longer handle the pain in their life so they took their life. They had no idea what the resulting effects would be. They were being totally consumed with the black hole of despair and hopelessness. They had no idea what the results would be. They didn't want to hurt or abandon anyone. They just wanted to be free from their pain, and their suicide has accomplished that, but has changed the lives of the survivors forever.

Neither one of these effects will be settled in a short time. These are part of this lengthy journey that survivors are on. These two effects change and the feeling of abandonment- will unfold in their due time. There is no express lane or fast lane that can be traversed in order for these two effects to be resolved. As with this entire journey of grief, there is no quick fix or easy way to get to the goal. The one trait that all survivors need to acquire is that of patience and endurance for the long haul.

--Reprinted from OBELISK, Chicago, IL



Stillbirth, Miscarriage, and Infant Death

A baby's death, whenever or however it occurs, is a profound loss. Unfortunately, society in general and friends and relatives in particular often do not acknowledge that this wished-for child, regardless of gestational age, was a unique individual and an important part of your future. Others may find it difficult to imagine deep grief over a child you as parents may have seen or held only briefly, if at all. To the contrary, the fact that your baby was carried in the womb or held in your arms for such a short while, and thus known by so few people, may add to the pain of losing the child and make grief even more isolating.

Memories, so important for the bereaved, allow a still painful, yet more gradual, good-bye. When a child dies before or shortly after birth, there may be precious few memories and little physical evidence

that he or she ever really existed. Many parents create memories by keeping a baby book or a special box containing hospital records, certificates, sympathy cards, pictures, and clothing or blankets. Your baby was and will always be a part of you.

Choosing a name, as well as having a funeral or memorial service, can help affirm your baby's life, however brief, and your love for your baby as parents.

Symptoms of Grief

When a baby dies, normal symptoms of grief are varied. Parental reactions and intensity of feelings may differ. Typical reactions include the following:

- Crying, loneliness, a feeling of isolation.
- A need to talk about the death and the details of what happened.
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, depression.
- Anger, guilt, blame.
- Loss of appetite, overeating, sleeplessness, irritability.
- Inability to concentrate, comprehend, or remember.
- Loss of goals and aims in life, a sense of despair about the future.
- Aching arms and frequent sighing.

Grief can last far longer than you or others may expect and has many ups and downs. The first year can be especially difficult when parents torment themselves with painful questions and statements such as the following:

- Why did this happen to my baby, my child?
- Why did this happen to our family?
- Why didn't I know something was wrong?
- Why didn't I go to the doctor sooner?
- It's all my fault!
- If only . . .

There may be no adequate responses or satisfying answers to these statements and questions. Be aware that anger and guilt are common reactions and usually accompany grief. Try to share and express these feelings as a way to release them.

A Surge of Hormones

Many mothers are constantly reminded of the death by a surge of hormones in their bodies after a miscarriage or stillbirth, and even after an infant dies that was being nursed. It is important to know that these hormones can trigger a roller coaster ride of emotions including depression and anxiety that can last weeks or months. These hormones and their effects can complicate the grieving process.

The Impact of Grief on Marriage

The reaction to the death of a baby is as individual as the person experiencing it. Spouses or partners often grieve in different ways, frequently misunderstanding each other's reactions or needs. You may be reluctant to express feelings of sadness when your partner has had a "good day" or vice versa. Some partners may not want to talk about the death, yet still feel comfortable when the other needs to do so.

Though many parents feel they must be "strong" for others in the family by not crying, doing so stops a natural reaction. Tears are a tribute to the child who has died and a healthy release.

Grieving is emotionally, physically, and mentally exhausting and leaves little energy for anything else, including communication between spouses. While a shared grief brings many couples closer together, care must be taken to preserve relationships. Understand that the bonding between each parent and the baby may be at different levels, causing grief of different intensities. Share your feelings while keeping in mind that outward expressions of grief may indicate only a portion of what a person is feeling inside.

Husbands and wives may react differently to intimacy as well. While one partner may need and seek this closeness and the assurance that not everything has changed, the other partner may take the suggestion of intimacy as an affront, not understanding how anyone could think of intimacy when a baby has died. Recognize that these reactions are normal. With time and patience, most couples re-establish intimacy when both feel ready.

It is important for couples to understand that there are no simple solutions to these problems, no timetable or recipe for recovery. Every effort should be made to share what you are feeling. Your relationship may be uncomfortable for a while as you cope with these intense feelings and emotions.

Coping with Family and Friends

Friends, relatives, and co-workers may be uncomfortable around you. They may not understand the intensity of your grief or may feel helpless to console and comfort you. Consequently, many offer clichés or platitudes as a source of comfort. You may hear some of the following statements:

- You will have more children.
- You were lucky; it was early in your pregnancy.



- You're still young enough to have more children.
- You're fortunate because you didn't bring the baby home from the hospital.

Statements like these hurt, but there is little you can say to such well-intentioned people. Since they have not had your experience, it will be difficult for them to understand the length and depth of your grief and sadness. Another way family and friends may offer comfort is to suggest you have another baby. Let your family and friends know how important this baby was to you and ask them to be supportive by listening.

Subsequent Pregnancy

The decision of whether to have another baby belongs to you and your partner. There is no "appropriate" waiting period. No matter what decision you make regarding a subsequent pregnancy or adoption, it will probably not change the length of your grief for your baby who has died. When planning another pregnancy, be aware that aside from the physical stress, subsequent pregnancies can often be difficult emotionally.

Surviving Siblings

Young siblings grieve, too, and can be passed over for support as being "too young to understand." Encourage your surviving children to talk about their baby brother or sister. Your children may find it helpful to share their feelings with others of their age who have experienced the death of a sibling. Reading material can be helpful.



Questions About Religious Faith

Your baby's death may cause you to challenge or question your faith or philosophy of life. For a time you may feel that life is unfair and meaningless, and that you have nothing to live for. Some of your anger may be directed at God and, you may need time to re-examine your religious beliefs.

These feelings may be frightening, but it is important to allow yourself the freedom to raise these questions without feelings of guilt. A sense of purpose and control will return to your life, but this is a gradual process and there is no time limit. For many, however, faith provides support and often helps parents to accept the unacceptable.

The Compassionate Friends Provides Support

Although nothing can take away the pain you feel right now, The Compassionate Friends is here to provide you support.

--<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>

Seasoned Greivers...

Memories Of Our Child Are Like a Rose

When a child dies, our memories are held tightly with lots of pain, just like the tightly folded petals of the rose but with the many thorns and pricks causing pain.

As we talk about our child and share memories with others, we begin to open ourselves to healing as the rose petals start to open ever so gradually. Just as a rose becomes more beautiful as it blooms, so do the memories of our child.

Yes, the thorns are still there and will hurt when touched, but oh how beautiful the rose and oh, how beautiful the memory of our children! Share the memory of your child, so that memory can start to bloom to become as beautiful as the rose

--Julie Timmerman TCF – Tulsa, OK

Newly Bereaved...

Heart Connections – Grief and Loss in a Pandemic

As we move toward the end of September, it's hard to believe that we have been experiencing life in a pandemic for over six months. Grief and loss are pervasive on multiple levels in our nation and in the world as we observe this half-year marker in time.

Some members of our TCF community have had a loved one die directly as a result of COVID-19. Others have experienced the death of a child, sibling or grandchild from other reasons during this restricted time. Many have experienced renewed pain from a devastating loss that is being particularly triggered by current events.

Grief has been compounded due to the additional losses of jobs, finances, health, social interaction, safety, and security. For bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents, some painfully familiar feelings have resurfaced such as anger, sorrow, shock, denial, helplessness, worry, and intense anxiety. When we can't control outside events, what can we do to deal with the uncertainty and grief? There are many daily activities and actions that can make a difference in how we take care of ourselves and our families in order to manage through this time.

Volunteer – Helping someone else is one of the best ways to help yourself. TCF is a wonderful

avenue to support others who are grieving, and seeking additional ways to volunteer outside of TCF can expand that further.

Community – Find community whether through a neighborhood group, an association, extended family, online interactive groups like Facebook or chat groups, or a book club. Most of these groups have ways to meet virtually, outside, or with social distancing at this time.

Physical Movement – Walk, exercise, do yoga or chair yoga, stretch, or play active, outdoor games with your children. This is more important than ever for the many adults who are working from home and children who are attending school virtually from home.

Gratitude – Spend a few minutes every day to identify, write down, or share 5 to 10 things that you are grateful for today. There are more things to be grateful for than we often realize, and this practice reframes your energy and the way you perceive your day.

Connection – Reach out and call people more often. No advanced technology is required for this, and fewer outside activities mean there is more opportunity for many of us to talk to people who we haven't spoken with in a while.

Nature – Get fresh air whether by walking or just taking a break to sit outside. Play with your pets outside for additional fun, love, and emotional support.

Faith, Spirituality, Mindfulness – Renew, deepen, or seek comfort in your faith or spirituality if this is part of your belief system. If non-faith approaches are what support you best, nurture those including meditation and practicing mindfulness. Seek out and talk to others who share your beliefs and perspectives.

Spend time each day engaging in a few of these activities. It can be hard to motivate ourselves when we are more isolated at home, so prioritize them and post reminder notes to do them if needed. Basic care like adequate sleep, fresh air, a relaxing bath, nutritious foods, plenty of water, peaceful music, and quiet moments help us manage through grief and isolation. If your grief is aided by keeping busy, try a new skill or hobby, cook a new meal, do a puzzle, or pick up a new book.

As the weariness of the pandemic sets in further, just like the weariness we experience over time with deep grief, focus on one day at a time. Invest in yourself and in your family in simple ways that you may not have had time for before. Believe that there

is something beyond this time in our lives that we cannot yet see that can be good again in a different way.

--Shari O'Loughlin TCF San Diego newsletter

Friends and Family...

The Simple Do's and Don'ts of Compassion



I received an email one day that caused me to think about how challenged we are when it comes to communicating condolences to a grieving parent, grandparent or sibling. It doesn't take much to figure out that many of us, having lost a child or not, are often challenged by how to really comfort or assist a grieving person. I have lost my son yet I often feel I can't find the right thing to say or do to comfort another grieving parent.

The email read that people shouldn't say, "How are you?" but rather ask about a specific area: "Is your health better?" or "Are you getting out more?" something particular rather than an open-ended question. I couldn't agree more. I'm of the philosophy, if they asked, they must want to know. The advice continued: don't just offer empty words of encouragement, find out what is really going on in another person's life, and keep track of how he or she is progressing through the struggle. That is some serious advice!

After our son died and during his struggle to live, our friends and family showered us with love and support. There are things though that I will never forget, our friends and Wyatt's friends driving to Sands Hospital to sit with us, paying for hotel rooms, bringing us food, truly supporting us daily. I will never forget, after Wyatt died, a friend came over and said not one word, he walked in the door and held me in a tight hug and wept with me, he hurt for me, for us, for Wyatt. The mother of one of Wyatt's friends, whom I'd never met, stopped by a few weeks after Wyatt's death just to give me a hug, to say she was thinking about us and that she was sorry for all that was lost. Dear friends of ours came to our home for six weeks every night and sat in the dark, loneliness of our childless home. They held us up when we could not stand alone. Another friend calls every week still, to chat, catch up, check on me to tell me she cares.

The things I remember are not so complicated, but what I know is they were actions more than

words. I often feel very alone in this journey, but I will never forget their actions held me up when all I wanted was close the door to life. There are some things about the death of a child that even compassion will not heal. The absence will always remain, but there are things that may bring a healing balm, if only briefly.

With this I began to think, what do our Compassionate Friends think, what did they experience that was supportive and helpful, what was painful or even hurtful. What can we share with the people of our community on how to better communicate, better share their heartfelt sympathies, and better help us as we traverse this life without our child or our children. So we asked, and here are some suggestions and the rationale:

* Don't tell me to call you if I need something, because I will not. Make specific offers to help: I am going to the store, what can I pick up for you? Can I take the kids to the park on Saturday afternoon? I will be bringing dinner on Monday for the family.

Does everyone like spaghetti? I'd like to come over and mow the lawn for you. It's a nice day outside, let's go for a walk.

* Don't think time is a miracle. Stay in touch with the grieving parents just to let them know you haven't forgotten their loss and you have them in your prayers.

No one wants to feel their tragedy can be so easily "put to the side" and forgotten when it is (was) such a dominating presence in their own lives.

* Don't let the child's death be the only topic of discussion. It's ok and helpful to be uplifting and to include other topics that are happy, and still make it known that you care.

* Don't talk "around the hurt" as if it never happened. This loss is a part of the parent's life, it's ok to discuss it in a plain and thoughtful way.

* Don't discuss the details of a child's death in front of the parent as if they are not there. The parent is fully aware of their child's death, include them in the conversation, parents can often offer insight.

* Don't use clichés that minimize the nature of a child's death. Avoid comments such as, "he shot himself in the head with that dumb answer" when in the presence of a parent who lost a child to a gunshot wound.

* Don't say, "You can try again for another baby" or "You're young, why don't you have another baby?"

Parents are grieving the death of a unique, wonderful and loved child, it is that child they miss

and long for. Grieve the loss of their child with them and leave the future to them.

* Don't say "at least" about anything, ever. At least they didn't suffer – maybe, but my child is dead. At least you have your memories – yes, but I want my child. At least you have other children – yes, but I want the child I lost. It was just her time to go or "It was meant to be". While some believe there is a purpose to every action or maybe a universal plan, others do not.

What seemed to be most compelling of the responses received was the DO list. It is short, but concise:

* Do act normal, don't try so hard not to talk about the child as if he or she had never existed. In describing a visit from a person who brought food and visited quite a while, one Compassionate Friend recalled they never once mentioned her child. She expressed how this made her feel by saying her daughter, "was and is a real person, just because she changed addresses doesn't mean we can't talk about her."



* Do share your favorite memory. Parents often enjoy hearing people share their favorite memory. When those memories are memorialized in writing and the person shares what they loved or appreciated about the child, things that made them laugh or smile, it can be read again later and cherished

as memories shared by others.

* Do show you care and spend time in fellowship. Grieving parents become very lonely or feel alone in their grieving and the company of others can be comforting or soothing, so don't just bring dinner, but share dinner, or visit and eat leftovers or encourage them to go outside for a walk.

* Do offer to clean their house, mow their lawn, take the kids somewhere, babysit or bring dinner. Many of the things people do on autopilot are unimportant or incomprehensible to a parent who is trying to plan a funeral or is in the depths of grieving.

** Do Give Hugs, Real hugs. They are powerful. One mom said about "real hugs" that people gave her, "it was like I could draw strength from them and I would feel a moment or two of peacefulness or connection that they might not understand my pain, but they understood I needed them."

--Marian Lambeth, TCF, Tallahassee, FL

Helpful Hint...**It's Okay to Laugh:**

Laughter is not a sign of "less" grief. Laughter is not a sign of "less" love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

--Marianne Waite, TCF, El Paso, TX

Book Review...

The Grief Of Parents When A Child Dies by TCF. Many facets of parental and sibling grief are discussed in a clear, sensitive manner. Includes the grief response, coping with loss is difficult, recovery is possible, communicating with the spouse, communicating with the children, and fears about going crazy. Available from the Centering Corp. (866) 218-0101

Welcome...**You Are Braver**

You are Braver than you will ever know.
 You may not realize it but you are valiant
 magnificent and strong in spirit.
 You are courageous.
 You have endured and somehow survived the most
 horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer.
 Your child has died.
 But somehow you have miraculously found the
 strength to still breathe in and out.
 And after a while, you managed to put one foot in
 front of the other and have tried to the
 best of your ability to adopt to a strange new world,
 One that exists without your precious child in it.
 A world you must step out into and face every day
 Without any outward sign that you are altered for
 life.
 If you were to wear your most grievous wound
 displayed on the outside of your body like permanent
 stigmata, would people recoil, from the sight or
 would they perhaps offer compassion and
 understanding for your piteous condition?
 That's why you are so brave.
 Although no one else can see how horribly injured
 you are,
 You are still doing your best to function and
 participate in this life.

I want to challenge you to be brave just for once
 more.

If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends
 meeting, please muster all the strength and courage
 you have to walk in the door for that first meeting.

We'll help you from there.

We care. We understand.

We too have the same wounds as you.

We need not walk alone.

--Submitted by Diane Hochstetler, Dee's Mom

I Am Doing Fine

I said I'm, doing good
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 I smiled and told my eyes to sparkle
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 I told a joke and laughed heartily
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 I offered comfort and encouragement
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 I did what has to be done
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 Then I turned my head and cried.
 And felt my broken heart.
 --Charlotte Roberts TFC/Montgomery AL

Remember Me

Remember Me as the wind stirs the leaves,
 Remember Me as the evening sunset
 casts it's rosy glow,
 Remember Me as you smell the earth after a fresh,
 spring rain,
 Remember Me when we hear the sound of
 a child's laughter,
 Remember Me as the warm summer sunshine
 caresses your skin,
 Remember Me as the first winter snowflakes
 fall to the ground,
 Remember Me as the smell of spring flowers
 tantalize our senses,
 Remember Me as you awaken in the morning by the
 song of a bird
 Remember Me as you greet a smile
 on a friendly face
 Remember Me as the days
 gently ease, one into another
 Remember Me as we walk through life
 Remember Me For I Shall . . .
 Remember You.
 --By Libby Graham



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

Taylor X. Hyland
Born: 8/06 Died: 7/20
Mother: Tessa Hyland

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

Margareta Sol Kubitz
Born: 9/05 Died: 9/09
Parents: Maria & Bill Kubitz

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Joshua Lozon
Born: 6/91 Died: 6/21
Mother: Tracey Gentile

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Max 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

Mathew Scott Mikelson
Born: 4/77 Died: 4/20
Mother: Dorothy Mikelson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Children Remembered

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...



I Miss You

I miss my brother
I miss him every day
I miss getting mad at him.
I miss his sweet ways.

I miss having my brother and me.
I miss him every day.
All the things I miss about him,
Out loud, I can barely say.

It's hard to talk about him.
My throat starts to tighten,
My heart feels weak.
But I'm always thinking about him
And sometimes I feel weak.

I don't talk about him much
Because it hurts so bad.
But when I talk about him
My heart feels free.
I miss my brother and I know he misses me.

Just because I'm not talking about him
Doesn't mean I don't miss him,
Every moment, every day.
I miss my brother, John.

I never put this in writing but I remember the day of your funeral. I was in my own little world, I couldn't believe what was happening. For the funeral home we collected pictures of you and made a collage of your life, but I wanted to take

more pictures of you later. I didn't want this to be the end.

We had the funeral and everyone showed how much they loved you. I hope you heard my song to you. You were and are the "wind beneath my wings." When we drove to the cemetery, I got out and knew we would lay you next to dad. Nothing seemed real. When I was sitting there before they were going to bury you, I didn't hear a word anyone said. I was looking at the trees blowing in the wind. I actually felt peace at that moment in time. I felt the wind and knew you were there. A peace I knew you gave. I love you. And I knew you were safe. Thank you for that moment of peace.

--Erica Herbert, TCF Troy Chapter, in loving memory of her brother, John Edward Herbert

For Grandparents...



A Grammy's Grief

As with most holidays, Grandparents' Day can produce many different emotions for me as a bereaved grandmother. While I am so very thankful for the three grandchildren my husband and I have living on earth, leading up to Grandparents' Day, the hole in my heart seems larger and sharper than other times. I miss all the beginning-of-school things with my granddaughter; no school clothes shopping, no new back packs, no first-day-of-school pictures of Maddie, no taking lunch to her school and visiting the book fair, and no Grandparents' Day pictures with her.

In January 2008, I became a bereaved grandparent and a bereaved parent on the same day in the blink of an eye. My oldest son, Josh, and his two-year-old daughter, Maddie, were killed instantly by an impaired driver.

I was changed forever. It did not take me long to realize my journey as a bereaved grandparent was different from most of the other bereaved grandparents I had come in contact with. I learned most grandparents who had suffered the loss of a precious grandchild (regardless of the child's age) experience a double grief. I too had experienced a double grief but mine was again different. I observed and read how grandparents grieve a few things: the death of their cherished grandchild, the future with that particular grandchild, the change/loss of the adult child they once knew, and the change in relationships such deaths cause. I feel blessed

to not witness my child being thrown into the role of a bereaved parent. I've shared with my husband, Matt, knowing what I know now, that I'd rather me be the bereaved parent and not witness my son go through such heartache. I cannot imagine watching my son living life after the death of his child.

In my opinion, most grandparents struggle to acknowledge or even work on their own grief. My sweet mother wrestled with the notion her grief did not really matter because I (her youngest child) was hurting so much. We were both bereaved grandparents but I was also a bereaved parent, something she knew nothing about. Conversations were difficult between us even though we had been so close for over 30 years. My mom needed and desired to do all she could to help me with my pain; after all, that is what mothers do for their children. I had to learn and express to my mother how I thought she could help me. We found common ground when I suggested it would truly help me if she did her own grief work, and acknowledged her own pain, heartache, and loss. Mom soon attended and volunteered at our local chapter of TCF. For that I am thankful. She learned much more at The Compassionate Friends meetings listening to me and other bereaved parents than a private conversation.

Nine years have gone. This journey sometimes feels like it's all uphill. So I choose to focus on what I need/can do for today. Therefore, today I will recognize the uniqueness I bring to the group of bereaved grandmothers and bereaved parents. Today I feel free to shed a little light on the pain of a bereaved grandparent to other parents. I will participate in Grandparents' Day activities with a family friend and little girl who was born the year Maddie was killed. I will take her lunch, walk with her to the school's book fair and treat her to a book. This year I think I'll buy a separate book and donate it in Maddie's memory. I'll miss Maddie deeply. I will do my best to love and enjoy my grandchildren who are walking this earth. I will make memories with them and try to live with no regrets – even with my broken heart.

--Lisa Jo Adkison aka Grammy to Hope,
Maddie, Mia and Josh
member of Ft. Worth Chapter September 2017
Posted by Sara Zeigler on September 8th, 2019,
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/blog>



From Our Members...

One Mother's View....

Following Dale's lead, I interviewed another bereaved parent for the new sharing column.. This month we hear from Debbie Walty who lost her daughter Rachel.

Q: How long has it been since your child died?

A: 6 yrs 4 ½ months

Q: May I ask how your child died?

A: Accidental overdose

Q: Would you mind describing for us what that time was like for you?

A: I was just devastated and barely went through the motions of living every day. My other children and my grandchildren (from my daughter) were what kept me going. I put on a mask every day and got up, got dressed and got going. There are many details that are still blurry.

Q: For you personally, what did you find was the most challenging aspect of life resulting from your child's death?

A: I was so close to my daughter and spent a lot of time with her that it was challenging just to figure out what to do with myself during of all the times I had always been with her. There was just an empty hole.

Q: Most people, but not all, report that the passage of time helps them. Have you found that to be true and, if so, could you relate for us what the intervening years have been like?

A: I believe the grief gets a bit softer over time, but then there are some days that I'm just overwhelmed with it. Her angel day and birthday are very difficult to get through.

Q: Are there other things you have found that have been a comfort to you? Would you share those things with us?

A: I came to my first TCF meeting about 11 months in. It was so good to be with other parents that understood what I was going through and to know that it was possible to survive the loss of my daughter. I also work with a couple of folks that have lost their children. It is comforting for me to know that they are close by if I ever need support and vice-versa.

Q: For you personally, what would you say has been the most beneficial thing that has helped you over the years in dealing with your grief?

A: I have found that helping others helps me more than I ever realized it could.

Q: Some report that the memory of tragic events tends to fade with time. Do you find that to be the case as well and, if so, would you say that that which fades is the memory of the person, the memory of the details, or is it that the memory of the details simply lose the impact they once had?

A: With me it's the memory of the details that have a lesser impact. I can remember just about every detail of the day she died and the day before. Some days I relive it over and over, and have a tough time— other days it's not so bad

Q: Is there anything else you would like to pass on to The Compassionate Friends community?

A: Just stay connected and don't isolate yourself. Thank you so much to you Debbie for sharing a little of your story.

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.

Flash Zoom Meetings ... During the "last" Zoom meeting, participants strongly wished to continue via zoom and, if possible, meet more frequently. Soooo, Connie and I will proceed with Flash meetings that are called on short notice, are of shorter duration but occur more frequently. The intent is to check in on each other, nothing more. The goal is meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. If you are interested in joining, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739.

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: Oct. 1st for Nov. 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. 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) 963-4646 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
 survivorsofsuicide.com
 taps.org (military death)
 save.org (suicide/depression)
 pomc.com (families of murder victims)
 grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)
 www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)
 Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER LEADER: Lori Galloway
 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Ken Konopasek
 WEBSITE: Leo Liccaridone

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik		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





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 Edward W. Myricks II, April 1972 - October 2011. Missing you and all the things we could have been doing together. We really got so close, now you're so far away. I love you, son.

Love, Dad and Mom

With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation, we acknowledge the generosity of the previous individuals and companies. Your tax deductible donation, given, in memory of your loved one enables us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and they also help defray newsletter and mailing costs. Please help us reach out to others in this difficult time. Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

When making a donation, please make checks payable to:
The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chpt.
Mail to: The Compassionate Friends So Bay/ L.A. Chapter
P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____

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

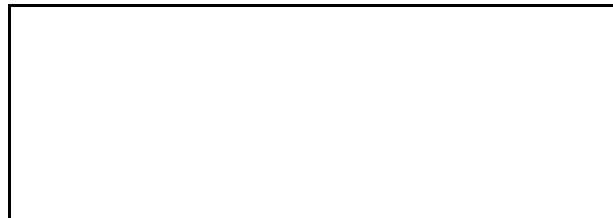
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October 2021

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.
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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or have a
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