



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Dec. 2021 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
**will be Dec. 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., Dec 1st meeting will start with "Honoring our Child This December."**

Our Chapter's Virtual World Wide Candle Lighting will be available on **Zoom, Sun., Dec. 12th**. Contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 for the link.

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.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF  
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## The Wednesday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will start with "Honoring Our Child This December."

With the holidays fast approaching we take the time to include our deceased child in our celebrations, our memories, and our memorials. The memories of past Christmases collide with the fear of facing this years holidays for many. Facing the festivities is different for bereaved families. Memories of earlier times with intact families and familiar traditions will need to be adjusted depending where we are in our grief. Join us as we share ways to cope, if not enjoy, parts of December.

Due to Covid, this year our chapter will NOT be holding a candle lighting service...but the National Office will. (Please see the article below.) Our chapter will do one virtually.

## Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Service

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on December 12th, 2021 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL), a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes, as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten. (For more information go to their website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org))

## Virtual World Wide Candle Lighting...

Leo Licciardone will be hosting our chapter's Candle Lighting on Zoom. Join us for our "virtual" Worldwide Candle Light Remembrance Ceremony. As candles are lit at 7:00pm local time on this day,



hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon, and this remembrance travels around the world as candles are lit in every time zone. Email Leo Licciardone at [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com) to get the link needed to join us for this very special service. Please have a candle and your child's picture available to share with us. Since we want to light our candles from 7 - 8, please sign on at **6:45 on Sunday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>**. This tribute can be shared with family and friends who contact Leo for the link. You can reach him if you are interested in participating at (310) 283-6739. We hope you can join us.

## Christmas Without My Child

Last night we held our Compassionate Friends chapter meeting for November: the topic was Holidays and Grief. We met in small groups to discuss how we are going to get through this most difficult of times. While we found no single answer, we did make some discoveries about ourselves. We also found some basic ways to take control of our lives.

In our group of eleven were several newly bereaved parents. Deep sorrow and anxiety were apparent in each face as we opened the dialogue—a discussion of the holiday season without their children. This anxiety and deep sorrow immediately became mine; I am that parent, I am still on the first leg of what may be a long journey without my child. Their tears were mine as we talked.

As the discussion progressed, I could see a bit of each parent's tension slowly release. I felt as if I could read their minds: give me some answers, tell me I will survive this, tell me how you did it. The answers were all different; the reassurances of parents who had lost their child and survived that first heartbreaking holiday were there. Some of the answers came from the newly bereaved as they explored their inner feelings.

We found consensus on one important factor: we must give ourselves permission to do what makes us most comfortable. We are not the caretakers to the world right now; we must take care of ourselves. If established traditions bother us, then we must turn to something else. What is the point of pouring salt into this open wound? Perhaps next year or the year after, when the wound is not so fresh, we will want to return to former traditions. Perhaps not.

Through tears and some light laughter, we realized that we are not invincible. We are not

responsible for the happiness of friends and extended family. We do not have to meet the expectations of others. We must accept our emotional limitations and the psychological and physical toll that grief takes on us. We must slow down and change our perspective. We must do what is right for us, especially during the holidays.

Most of those who had been through at least one holiday season without their child felt that making changes for the first year or two was a positive step forward. We found that talking honestly with our family about our feelings might make them feel temporarily uncomfortable but it did clear the air about expectations. We agreed that limiting our casual social relationships negated the need to make explanations regarding our lack of interest in holiday celebrations. By “dropping out” we also eliminated obligations in many areas. This gives us the freedom to choose simplicity over stress, essentials over hassles, and flexibility over anxiety. This gives us the opportunity to live in the moment, go where our emotions take us and listen to our hearts.

While we all agreed that the holidays are overwhelming for parents whose children have died, we also agreed that we are each individuals and we each perceive the world differently. Some of us want and need the old traditions during the holiday season.

Some of us need to be with people who are not part of our grieving process. Others among us felt that solitude and simplicity were the answer.

The answer to the question of how we get through the holidays is found within each one of us. We each have our own truth. The challenge, we decided, is to honor that truth and hold the line against external pressures. A few of our newly bereaved parents could barely choke out a word or two. Others were more vocal. While grief consumes some of us for many, many years, others appear to “go with the flow” of life very early in their grief. What feels right for one of us may be abhorrent to someone else.

One universal truth did emerge from our conversations: we miss our beautiful children and love them as deeply as when they walked beside us. We live in this purgatory each day of the year, but during the holidays it seems most oppressive. Our children have been torn from our lives forever. Daily life and special traditions will always reflect the deep void that has become our reality. We need our Compassionate Friends at the holiday season. We

need to know that others have walked this road, have lived this nightmare and have managed to survive. We each continue to rediscover hope through our Compassionate Friends. And in finding that hope we have given and received the purest gift of the season: the possibility of peace.

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

## Holiday Reflection

Since we cannot ignore it or make it go away, we can deal with the situation by making specific plans with our families. We can assess priorities. We can make changes. We can decide what traditions to uphold and which to set aside this year. We can choose to openly acknowledge our grief for our children, siblings and grandchildren.

We can think about some very special gifts. To ourselves we can grant the gift of acceptance by realizing that our grief is a necessary healing process.

To our families, we can extend the gift of empathy by remembering that they, too, hurt. To our missing loved ones, we can bestow the gift of homage by determining to work through grief so that we may live life to the fullest.

--Candy McLaughlin TCF Minneapolis, MN



## A Decembered Grief-Living With Loss While Others Are Celebrating.

“You have had a deep scratch – no, a gash – inflicted on you. While you weep, while you wrestle with the realities of life without the one or ones you love, the world goes right on with the joys, the exuberance, the excitement, the frantic panic of the season. Alter, rather than abandon traditions. You may have a signature tradition in your family, something that your loved one dearly loved or perhaps even started. Should you go through with it? Perhaps you’ve always had a big home-cooked family dinner on Christmas Eve. This year the family could still gather, but maybe go to a restaurant. Or do a light meal, eaten on laps in the den or living room rather than at that memory-soaked dining room table. The essence of the tradition—the family together on Christmas Eve – will be honored, but the

setting altered this year. Next year you can re-decide.

Give your grief its voice. You could give your grief its voice by taking a moment around the table or the tree, to speak a word about your loved one. Say your loved one's name. Deliberately say the name – “David loved Christmas,” or “Oh, how Mary enjoyed the bowl games!” Your intentionality will make it easier for others to say the names as well.

Toast your loved one. I would love to propose a toast to the memory of \_\_\_\_\_, who this year spends Christmas in the real world. Let those around the table add, “May his or her memory to us be a blessing.”

You only compound your grief by deciding not to mention the deceased, not recalling his or her contributions to the family's memories and traditions. Do what you can do and what feels right.

--Harold Ivan Smith; educator and grief counselor.

## Handling the Holidays

Christmas and Chanukah, two holidays rich in tradition and intimately connected with children, are often especially difficult for bereaved families.

What you do, or don't do, may depend on whether or not you have young children or grandchildren who should not be deprived of the joy the holidays can bring.

Try to finish shopping well in advance so that you are not inundated by holiday displays and music which the stores seem to initiate earlier and earlier each year. You might want to shop by catalog or the internet. Take advantage of the people who said to let them know how they can help and ask them to shop or do holiday chores for you.

In consultation with your immediate family, decide which traditions you wish to keep and which you want to change. As you progress in your journey through grief, you may find that you are able to reinstate some traditions you could not handle in the beginning.

Do things at different times or in different places if that works for your family. You may want to observe the holidays by yourselves, rather than take part in large gatherings. If you do take part in family or other gatherings, feel free to mention your child if you want to. If others are uncomfortable, it's their problem. Do not let them make you feel guilty for



talking about your child or crying. You might want to explain in advance that this is a difficult time for you and that talking about your child and even shedding some tears are necessary for healing.

Memorialize your child in some way. Light special candles; have a special Chanukah menorah; fill his or her stocking with messages of love; have a special tree or decorate the tree with special ornaments; buy presents for a needy child of the same age; make charitable donations; volunteer in a hospital or homeless shelter.

Try attending a TCF or other memorial service. While difficult, this may allow you to express your feelings in a caring and comfortable atmosphere. Savor any moments of happiness as a special holiday gift. Your children would not want you to be miserable. Honor them by remembering them with love.

--Stephanie Hesse, TCF, Rockland County, NY and North Palm Beach County, FL

## For David

It's impossible to explain the pain you have when you lose someone so dear! Your life stops! And when it starts again, it is with a huge gap. Your life as you knew it will never be the same, for you and anyone that knows you. There are many firsts, the birthdays, the holidays; how to answer the questions of strangers—how many children do you have?

As I was thinking about the last 7 ½ years without you in our lives, I discover that there is a void in my memory. I remember that the days and months ran together. I remember wondering if my life will ever again be like those who move through their days as if nothing devastating has ever happened to them. I notice that I have lost the ability to focus—even today my attention span isn't as good as it used to be. I still feel the pain and the void when I'm counting seating for a family get together; I look forward to my dreams in hopes that you will be there!

The only thing that comes to my mind when trying to compare this pain to a life experience is when you skid and fall, and keep sliding. You badly scrape and cut a knee or an elbow or both. The pain is so unbearable. It's hard to move without it hurting. Your body goes into shock. When it finally starts scabbing over and healing, the slightest movement can open the wound back up; it oozes and it seeps, and you ask if this misery will ever stop! And then the healing process starts all over

again.

Finally, the scab is gone, but a scar remains. At first, the scar is red and very tender until it gets used to being there. Then it becomes taught and tight! Then, one day when someone points out the scar—you say, yes, it's a reminder of a very painful accident. I see it every day, but now I am able to bend it without pain.

Some days when the weather changes it becomes harder to bend. It's gets stiff and hurts; it's a fresh reminder of the day I hurt it. But most days I live with it just as it is; it is now a part of me. I remember how painful it was; I remember the scab. But now, I see the scar, and sometimes it even makes me smile.

David, I know you are in a beautiful place with many that have gone before and after you. I see you helping others, laughing, loving, and saving a place for us. I am thankful for your life and the many blessings you still give us. I am thankful to God that you are no longer suffering and in pain, and most days, I feel joy in my heart because I know that you are happy! Your father and I love you now and forever!

--Jill Eagleston, TCF Southlake, TX  
In Memory of our son, David Eagleston

## Permission To Grieve

Give yourself permission to hurt and ask others to understand. It will be much better for all of you, if you keep from being too brave, too polite. That makes others feel more helpless, more distant from you, perhaps even a bit rejected.

If you can, talk very briefly to your immediate family, especially to your partner, and ask for patience, promising yours in return. Because we all react differently to great emotional strain, this can be a time of temporary estrangements in your family – this is also the time to remember all the reasons why you loved each other in the first place. Don't worry about feeling 'nothing': your mind has been dealt a terrible blow, and your old feelings will need time to return. Do let others give you evidence of their devotion, concern, warmth, attention, empathy – after all, these are the finest gifts we can give to each other. And believe me: honesty in sharing your feelings is a gift from you to them, showing your friends and your helpers that you trust them, that



they are important and that they are appreciated.

--Alexandra Sascha Wagner

## What Makes Suicide An Especially Difficult Loss?

Suicide is a reaction to overwhelming feelings of loneliness, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness and depression. It occurs when a person's pain exceeds his or her resources and ability to cope. It is the third leading cause of death for people 15-24 years of age.

The suicide of a loved one raises painful questions, doubts and fears. Cultural and religious interpretations of an earlier day are responsible for the stigma associated with suicide. The knowledge that your love was not enough to save the person you loved, and the fear that others will judge you, may raise feelings of failure, of shame and blame in addition to the sorrow of loss.

Here are things you can do when you have lost a loved one to suicide:

- For those with concerns of a spiritual nature, do try to find a gentle, non-judgmental member of your faith, and open yourself to that person.
- Rather than being concerned about the stigma surrounding suicide, concentrate on your own healing and survival.
- It is important that you confront the word suicide, difficult as it may be. Keeping the cause of death a secret will deprive you of the joy of speaking about your loved one and will isolate you from family and friends who want to support you.

If you don't allow yourself to have that experience, you are blocking your healing. Instead of trying to deny or medicate the pain, realize that the hurt is necessary in order for you to heal. Our experience of mental suffering offers us the chance to grow stronger in the process.

--Author unknown; Submitted by David Terrell, TCF Tyler, TX

## 6 Ways To Remember Lost Babies At Christmas

Most people will tell you that Christmas time is about joy, family, giving and the birth of the savior. It's literally supposed to be the "most wonderful time of the year." The song says so. However for some people the idea of Christmas is bittersweet. For parents who have lost a child, Christmas can be one

of the saddest and most anxiety producing holidays. Instead of joy you feel anguish for what might have been, you have an emptiness that's hollowed out your heart. The first year is especially difficult.

Six years ago we were facing a Christmas like the one described. I was too numb to even be considered a mess. Most days I don't really understand how I was functioning.

Christmas hit just six months after our son Alexander died. I was lost in grief still and so angry when I thought about the joy of the season. My family, the one I had dreamed about all my life, was missing the biggest piece.

I'm not really sure how we made it through that first Christmas. We put up the tree, but left all the ornaments off sans a few angels I picked up. We went to the celebrations, where I generally cried in the bathroom at some point. We went to church and I prayed for my heart, for my son's heart that stopped before he was born and for the new heart that was growing inside me.

We put one foot in front of the other, we took deep breaths and one forced smile at a time, we made it through that Christmas. Along the way we found ways to cope and, for us, that meant involving Alexander in as many ways as we could.

Most people will shy away from bringing up the name of a lost baby or child. But to parents longing to show some proof of existence for that child, not talking about them at joyous times of the year can be as painful.

You worry people will forget your baby. You worry you will forget. But the truth is you can still make that baby or child a part of the happy times in your life. They don't always have to be remembered with sorrow and longing. You can remember them with love and honor them in ways that will help make a difference for your heart and will leave a positive impression on the memories of their siblings.

Here are a few ways to include your angel baby in "the hap-happiest season of all," even when it doesn't feel so happy.

**Ornaments** My husband and I buy each other a special ornament every year at Christmas time. We've done this since our first Christmas together when we were dating and today our tree is filled with our memories.

When our son died I started buying an ornament for him each year too. I did this inadvertently. It started with an ornament I saw of a fairy holding a baby and every year since then I try to buy him an

angel ornament and/or an ornament with his name on it. By now our tree is filled with his ornaments too and every time I see them there is a little bit of longing there, but there is also comfort in knowing he existed and was a part of our lives.

**Stockings** Each year my son's stocking goes up right along with his sibling's stocking. I love doing this because it's the one place I can see our complete family. Most of the year we can only carry Alexander with us in our hearts, but at Christmas time this is another visual reminder that he is there.

Since that very first Christmas I have purchased gifts from Santa for Alexander. Some people probably think it's silly but I place them under the tree, right next to the presents for everyone else and I love this tradition.

Later in the day we head to the cemetery to open the gifts and leave them with him. For this reason the gifts are usually little toys or trinkets that will hold

up in the Chicago land weather. I try to match the gifts each year to his age and think about what he might like. This will admittedly get more difficult as he "gets older" but for now it brings me a lot of comfort.

Usually, the cemetery leaves the toys there for a few seasons or so. In the

spring, summer or fall my kids end up playing with those toys whenever we go to visit. Watching them do this is so beautiful and precious to me. For them it's just playing with toys, but for me it's the only way I get to see them play with each other.

**Giving toys in the name of that child** We are starting this tradition this year and giving some toys to toy drives in the name of our son. My daughter actually spurred this idea because there was a toy drive at school that she wanted to buy toys for. It was so sweet hearing her make the suggestion to give to someone else, and I knew she would love to help me pick out some toys in the name of her older brother to gift.

**Make them special Christmas flowers** Most cemeteries sell wreaths you can buy and have them place on behind or near the headstones. We've done this in the past but I usually make Alexander a special Christmas flower bouquet. Making fake floral bouquets is much easier than I originally thought it would be, and I like the idea of being able to do something for him specifically versus something to help me cope or to help someone else.

As a parent of a child who died, you don't really get the opportunity to parent them. I look at making



the Christmas bouquet as sort of a way of dressing him for the season. My other kids have to wear uncomfortable clothes and shoes that hurt their feet. It's only fair that I bring him a bouquet with too much glitter and something that lights up too.

**Volunteering** This hasn't been part of the way we honor Alexander yet because that first year I was too damaged to help. The second year we had our daughter and now I feel both kids are still a little too young to help out with a toy drive or some other type of volunteer effort. However, this is something I would like to include in our future ways to celebrate the season with Alexander, especial as our children grow and he "grows" out of the stage where Santa toys might make sense.

**Include them in the Christmas card photo** A lot of loss mothers I know look to incorporate their lost children into family photos and Christmas cards. Some include their Molly Bear, which you can read more about here. Others will wear jewelry, a necklace or a bracelet that represents that child. In Christmas cards I've seen angels that have represented a lost baby too.

I haven't done a Christmas card in a few years (Bad mom!), but those first few years I would write his name along with our's at the bottom of the cards. This was obviously more overt than a necklace or a bracelet, but, especially that first year, I was searching so hard for way to make him real and validate his existence. As the years have gone and my pain has dulled, I've included him more subtly because I realized that it's not important if other people know he was there. I will always know he existed.

--By Rachel Quenzer from her blog

## Seasoned Greivers...

### The House Without A Christmas

In Christmases past, our cottage by the pond danced in greenery and lights. Wreaths hung like necklaces on each window. Our Christmas tree was adorned with much loved old ornaments; handmade trinkets by Alex, our daughter; and those picked up in our travels. She received the White House Christmas ornament every year and carefully hung them so they were almost all in the same place. Once she went to bed, I would quietly space them out a bit.



Around aged seven, Alex and her Dad started a tradition of singing Happy Birthday to me first thing every Christmas morning. Yes, I'm a Christmas baby. She would proudly march into my bedroom with a Snicker candy bar on a plate and a single candle which highlighted her bright smile.

On April 30, 2012, our beloved Alex was killed in a car accident when she was sixteen. When she died, most of me died too. I was fifty years old. The shell of my person still existed but the rest of me disappeared into a fog of deep depression and oblivion. My movements were sluggish if I moved at all. My thoughts were garbled and I closed my bedroom door to shut out the world.

My house tightly gripped me and all my grief. The blinds and doors remained closed, and the staleness of death, desperation, and despondency lingered in the air. Pain seeped into the walls and floors and the boards moaned whenever I walked across them.

Over time, the veil of death parted slightly and I began to come out of shock. It was only then I could truly see the brokenness surrounding me. Old, run down, and forgotten. The house was the outward appearance of how I felt internally. Five years after her death, I had aged at least ten years. My voice was noticeably more quiet and an octave lower. Replacing my smiling face was a permanently etched frown on an older woman.

One day, I caught the first glimpse of myself and scowled. How dare this old, sour woman take over my mind, body, and soul? Alex was so full of life and laughter. I began to make small changes to make her proud of me.

She loved acting and being on stage. Two years ago, at Halloween, which was six years after her death, I ordered a queen costume and gave out candy at church. I spoke with a British accent and using my scepter, made all the children either a prince or princess. They hugged me. I delighted in their amazement that a real "Queen" was giving out candy. Admittedly, I did bring out my best acting chops. Such a small thing for me to do, but it made the kids happy. A few of the blinds and interior doors in my house opened. My heart peeked out and noticed the sun was shining.

Christmas was on the way, our seventh without Alex. Where I once avoided anything to do with the season, I noticed my heart opening a bit more to allow a wreath on the front door. I ordered a Mrs. Claus suit including granny boots, glasses, apron, and a wig and visited two preschools in the area.

For that short time, those children were my children and Alex was with me once again, smiling, laughing, and singing the Christmas carols she loved so dearly. Perhaps this will be the year our house is adorned in lights and love and our hearts will rejoice in Christmas once again.

--Susan Tweedy, In Memory of Alex Tweedy

## Newly Bereaved...

### What Is “Normal” After Your Child Dies?

- \* Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile because your child is missing from all the important events in your life.
- \* Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don't like to sit through anything anymore.
- \* Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand “what if's” and “why didn't I's” go through your head constantly.
- \* Normal is reliving the day your child died, continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.
- \* Normal is having the TV on the minute you walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.
- \* Normal is telling the story of your child's death as if it were an everyday, commonplace activity, and then seeing the horror in someone's eyes at how awful it sounds. And yet realizing it has become a part of your “normal.”
- \* Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthdays and survive these days.
- \* Normal is a heart warming and yet sinking feeling at the sight of something special your child loved.
- \* Normal is having some people afraid to mention your child.
- \* Normal is making sure that others remember your child.
- \* Normal is everyone else eventually going on with their lives.
- \* Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse, not better.
- \* Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to your loss, unless they too have lost a child. Nothing compares.
- \* Normal is realizing you might cry everyday.
- \* Normal is being impatient with everything and everyone except someone stricken with grief over

the loss of their child.

- \* Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with other grieving parents.
  - \* Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned the house, did the laundry or if there is any food.
  - \* Normal is learning to lie to everyone you meet and telling them you are fine. You lie because it makes others uncomfortable if you cry. You've learned it's easier to lie to them than to tell them the truth that you still feel empty and lost. And last of all...
  - \* Normal is hiding all the things that have become “normal” for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are “normal.”
- Written by a Grieving Mother

## Friends and Family...

### How to Help A Grieving Mother



- Show up. Be there for them.
  - Listen. Mothers love to talk about their babies.
  - Say the baby's name. Recognize the baby as real.
  - Mark the date and remember the baby with the mother on the anniversary of death each year.
  - Pray for her.
  - Call, check in, or send little reminders that you care. Let her know you are thinking of her.
  - Allow time. Everyone has a different time line for their grief. Do not rush them.
  - Help her do something to honor her baby.
  - Hug her.
- [www.Sunshineafterstorm.us](http://www.Sunshineafterstorm.us)

## Helpful Hint...



### Some Holiday Stress-relievers:

1. There is not enough time for everything. Ask yourself, “What am I willing to give up?” and then, let them go.
2. Practice saying “No” to the things you do not want to do. Here are versions of the same message: “No thanks.” “I just can't.” “I won't be doing it this year.” “Sorry.” Remember, when you say, “No” you don't have to give reasons.
3. Plan ahead. Make yourself sit down and write out your “things to do” list. Then go through it and,



as mentioned in #1, ask yourself, "What can I omit?" Also, arrange your list in priority fashion to put the most important things at the top of the list.

4. If you must purchase gifts, ask yourself, "How can I do this with the least amount of stress? For example, consider using the Internet, having someone else pick up the gifts, consider giving money or gift cards as gifts, or have a family lottery where each person picks a name from a hat and buys only that person a gift. Try one of these ideas this year as an experiment just to see how it works.
5. Start early. Pick a date to get done many of your obligations now. Don't put it off. Remember how crazy last minute stuff can be. You don't need any more craziness in your life.
6. Do not rely on your memory to keep track of things to do in your life. Presume you will forget things and write everything down.
7. Ask yourself, "How can I work smarter, not harder?"
8. And finally ask yourself, "In what ways do I wish to keep things the same and how do I want to change things?"

—Bob Baugher

## Book Review...



**REMEMBERING WITH LOVE** Messages of hope by Elizabeth Levang & Sharon Ilse. Over 300 short pieces remind us that we can and will survive, and assure us that one of the secrets to healing lies in remembering our loved one forever.

## Welcome...



## Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the twinkling lights, the red and green candles, the poignant aroma of evergreen...Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...Beyond all of these...there is hope.

Hope...It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness. The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and cry completely without fear and hollowness. It is the hope that someday we can remember our children

with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you I would wish hope, peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing, and listening. In the sharing of our grief with one another and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and learn all of these gifts.

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Editor's note: We welcome you to our chapter and hope you will find that sharing the pain and trauma of losing you child is lessened as you find comfort from other bereaved parents who are going/gone through the same anguish. We are here for you.

## Wishing You The Colors of Christmas

This year I will leave behind the clanging reds and the vibrant greens, the glowing golds and the silver glittering plaids of Christmas.

I will tune out "Jingle Bells" and "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer" and let "Silent Night" and "Hark The Herald Angels Sing" play softly in my heart.

This year I will allow time for silence and quiet meditation on the birth of The Christ Child, and turn off the squawking and shrieking of holiday commercials.

I want to be drawn in and comforted by the peace of soft blues and the calm of snowy whites, and to search the sky, the moon and the stars for promise and hope during the winter nights.

I will decorate with Christmas angels who stand still in my home, guarding my heart from pain, and the nativity scene which keeps me focused on the truth.

I will not yet open those sacred boxes of Christmas ornaments and priceless mementos which filled my home in Christmas past.

I want to think about the praise of the angels where our children celebrate Christmas, and leave behind the chaos the world has created and named Christmas.

I wish for each of us to have the courage to search the memories in our hearts and to not shut them out because of our unspeakable pain.

I wish for us to allow the presence and comfort of family and friends who love us, and remember that their celebration is tinged with lingering pain and private sorrow.

I wish for you the peace and softness of Christmas.

—Carol Thompson, TCF Tyler, TX  
Always Remembering Sarah



## 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

Sean Michael Denhart  
Born: 3/88 Died: 12/20  
Mother: Janna Denhart

Luke Edward Devlin  
Born: 12/07 Died: 12/07  
Parents: Jacqueline & Tom  
Devlin

Allison Jeanine Kirkbride  
Dewart  
Born: 10/87 Died: 1/06  
Parents: Z & Michael Dewart

Ryan Dobie  
Born: 7/92 Died: 2/19  
Parents: Linda & Douglas  
Dobie

Michael John Dornbach  
Born: 7/60 Died: 10/17  
Parents: Maria Trillegi &  
Edward Dornbach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shawn Eric Fillion  
Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21  
Mother: Lise Fillion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blanca Isabel Meza  
Born: 9/21 Died: 9/21  
Mother: Angela Azurdin-Meza

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

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

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

Mathew Scott Mikelson  
Born: 44/77 Died: 4/20  
Mother: Dorthy Mikelson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emma Nicole Lerner  
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06  
Mother: Nancy Lerner

Joseph Mc Coy  
Born: 9/11 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Amy McCoy

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

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

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

Sarah Mc Donald  
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17  
Parents: Tom & Shideh  
Mc Donald

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

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

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

Kirk Nicholas Mc Nulty  
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14  
Mother: Elaine Mc Nulty

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

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

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

Jeremy Stewert Mead  
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14  
Mother: Carol Mead

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Our Children Remembered



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: Alexander &  
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

## Our Children Remembered

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

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

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

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

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

## Birthday Tributes...



Sorry, no tributes were submitted

## For Siblings...

### A Holiday To-Do List:



As a reflection back on the past 13 (Wow! has it really been that long?!) Christmases, I would like to share some ways that I have handled the holidays, as well as some additional thoughts. This time of the year is bittersweet for me now, as opposed to the first Christmas without my older brother, David. That was the worst. At any rate, I can handle November and December much better now. I suppose I've learned a little along the way, and gained strength each year. Nonetheless, the anniversary of his death always gets to me. Unfortunately, it falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Here's my list of suggestions for honoring a sibling whom you have lost, and on simply making it through yourself:

1. Hang that stocking. Go ahead. Put up your sibling's stocking. It isn't as though your brother or sister never existed, and isn't still a part of your life.
2. Write a poem or letter to your sibling and put it in the stocking.
3. Put up a tree, or continue with your holiday traditions. Yes, this is VERY difficult. But for most of our siblings, this was their favorite time of year. Celebrate how blessed you have been to

have had your sister or brother for holidays past. Decorate the way THEY would have wanted to, instead of the way you would do it.

4. Create a "memory" box. This is simply a box of belongings from your sibling, or pictures of your sibling, etc. Wrap it in festive holiday paper, and put it under your tree if you have one.

5. Buy a gift for your sibling. Maybe it is something they truly would have wanted for the holidays, maybe it's something the two of you would have enjoyed together or gotten a good laugh out of. This can be VERY therapeutic.

6. Go somewhere that your sibling would have wanted to go—the beach, a movie they would have liked, a favorite restaurant, wherever.

"Share" this time with your sibling. This is also good on their birthday. Celebrate that they had a life and that they are a part of yours!

7. Bake a favorite holiday goody of your sibling's.

8. Get together with your family and cry (and LAUGH—it's OK to do this) at some great family memories from years past that involved your sibling. Share thoughts on great places you may have visited for the holidays, or anecdotes of you and your sibling trying to peek at what your gifts were ahead of time.

9. Put together a photo album of your sibling. This could be of your sibling's life in general, or of a specific subject, like the sport your sibling played, or holidays past.

10. Give your album to your parents. Cry (and LAUGH!) at the pictures and the memories they generate.

I hope that you are blessed this holiday season, and that my suggestions are helpful. Please know that the holidays get easier with time, and that you WILL make it through, even though it may seem impossible.

--Amy Baker Ferry TCF, Heart of Florida Chapter

## For Grandparents...



### A Vision Of The Future

It was Christmas Morning, when all alone, I arrived at the cemetery around 9:30 A.M. The morning was mild and overcast gray with a slight mist creating a discomfort to my arms and shoulders. On this wondrous day, I went to the gravesite to visit with Loral and Macy, my beautiful Grand Daughters, who died in a tragic car/train crash 18 months and one week earlier. This was the second Christmas that I have had to

endure without the presence of their bright, shiny, and smiling faces. This is the second Christmas that I had to endure this great celebration without the sound of their joyous laughter so in tune with their brothers, sisters, and cousins.

This morning, while alone at the gravesite, as usual I talked with the girls, I prayed over them. I told them of all the gifts that their cousins, brothers, and sisters had received for Christmas. I cried that I never lose memory of their facial expressions of smiles and tears, and the sounds of their happy and sad voices.

There is a bench nearby and I sat down and enjoyed the silence and peacefulness of the cemetery. The gray weather seemed more tolerable now that I was able to release some inner feelings with my visit.

As I sat on the bench, enjoying the serenity of the cemetery, an old car drove up and stopped across the way. From this car, slowly emerged an elderly man from the passenger's side. His hair was white and he was tall and gaunt from his elderly stage of life. The driver, an elderly lady, got out of the car and carefully made her way around to assist the old man who, with a walking cane, had slowly and carefully proceeded to walk toward a destination. The fragile old lady held his right hand to help keep him balanced and possibly to keep her own self upright. Slowly and carefully, they walked maybe forty feet where they stopped and stood side by side. There they looked down at a grave marker. After a minute or so, the old man very weakly and carefully bent over and touched the headstone and then slowly rose to the erect position and lifted his hand to wipe the tears from his eyes as he gazed far across the cemetery. The lady, also wiping tears, turned from the marker and slowly made her way back to the car as the old man stayed still and stood over the grave. She entered the car with a strained and unmistakable form of grief showing on her face.

The old man, in the manner of a soldier, stood erect, completely still, not moving his head or any other part of his body as he gazed across the cemetery, stood several minutes and then he bent over and touched the marker again.

Somehow it was so easy for me to visualize and feel his loving respect for the person beneath the headstone. Again the man raised and stood erect and gazed across the cemetery for several more minutes. I sensed that he saw nothing but the events of the past, and that he was in a trance with a mind full of memories of a lost child of long,

long, ago. Never before in my life could I have felt this sort of understanding and compassion burning from within me, in observation of a stranger in grief. The old man touched the headstone one more time and then turned and carefully made his way back to the car where the lady helped him get back in. Then they just drove off.. ...probably to finish their Christmas Day routine of many long years of grief possibly—for the loss of their child.

What I saw this morning was only my observation and distinct feelings that they were grieving for a lost child. Here were people in their eighties or maybe early nineties that withstood the grief of a lifetime, who still grieve, who still have memories, and who still await that great reunion. They are closer to that date than most of us, and to that, I felt envy.

This simple observation and realization on this Christmas morning is a signal or sign to me softly confirming that the journey of grief in the loss of a child, will always be with us all of the way to our road's end.

Even though it is a rough road, it is our road. We cannot change that. It is a road for "People Like Us" who have lost children. Our road will go into the books and be a part of our legacy. Our descendants will know of our road, but hopefully, will never have to understand or endure that road.

I dearly miss Loral and Macy...and always will.  
-- Paw Paw, Donald Moyers, TCF Galveston TX

## From Our Members...



### The Most Difficult Time of the Year

The holiday season is upon us. Sparkling lights and decorations adorn houses and stores. Holiday advertisements, shows, and songs saturate the airwaves. Cards from relatives, friends and businesses arrive day after day in the mail. Party invitations are sure to follow. You can't help but see the joy and excitement in the faces of children and adults alike.

The problem is, many bereaved parents don't see this as a season of joy – but one of dread. They often suffer in quiet anguish amid the constant reminders and pain associated with a time of year almost exclusively focused on celebrating family when their child isn't here to celebrate with. Some resent the relentless happiness and joy — and may even come to *hate* this time of year.

After losing my 4-year-old daughter, Margareta, in the fall of 2009, my anxiety of Christmas without her was off the charts. How could I celebrate a holiday primarily focused on children when one of my children had just died? While my husband and I would have preferred to skip Christmas altogether, we still had three young boys who believed in Santa.

We knew it might be a confusing time for our boys. So we took them to a workshop for bereaved children to help them navigate their conflicting feelings during the holidays. They made memorial candles for their sister and ornaments featuring her pictures. Guided by grief counselors, they shared their feelings with other children who had recently lost parents and grandparents.

In the weeks before Christmas, one of our boys wondered aloud whether Santa knew if Margareta had died. I told him yes, Santa knew she died. It was quickly followed by the question, "Will he still bring her presents?" I had no idea what to say, so I said as much. "I don't know, but I'm sure Santa will know what to do." But I didn't know. This was all new territory and incredibly painful.

Shopping for presents was pure torture. I couldn't avoid walking past all the beautiful party dresses Margareta would have loved to wear, and seeing all the toys she would have wanted. I constantly fought back tears amid the thick crowd of holiday shoppers.

Ultimately deciding that Santa wouldn't leave her stocking empty, I purchased a wind chime I thought she would have liked. That was her only present. We also followed a suggestion I had read for people grieving during the holidays. Each of us would write a note to Margareta and put it into her stocking.

Christmas morning came and the boys rushed to find presents Santa had brought. They were lost in the magic of the day while we stood by with smiles painted on our faces. We did find comfort in their joy, but it was hard to watch.

A few hours later, we drove to the cemetery to hang up Margareta's wind chime on a tree near her grave. I have to say, there is nothing quite as sobering and heartbreaking as having to visit your 4-year-old child's grave on Christmas day to deliver their present.

In the years since her death, Christmas has become significantly easier. After years of working through our grief, we once again experience the joy the season brings. Yet it

doesn't mean the pain is completely gone; just softened.

As I wander through the stores during the holidays now, I face a new kind of pain. Instead of seeing what I know she would have wanted at 4-years-old, I'm faced with the reality that I *don't* know what she would have wanted at her would-have-been age now. It's a hard reminder that I didn't just lose my daughter – I lost the future with her that I had dreamed of.

So, if you find yourself dreading the impending holidays, know that you're not alone. There are plenty of people that understand how you feel. Also know that as time goes on, it will get easier to handle. And hopefully one day you'll come to find joy in the season again. Wishing you peace.  
--Maria Kubitz, TCF South Bay/Los Angeles, CA  
In loving memory of Margareta Sol Kubitz

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.

**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.

**Flash Zoom Meetings ...** are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration. The intent is to check in on each other and share, nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. If you are interested in joining, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739.



**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: Dec. 1st for Jan. 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 Lori 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. 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 co-leader).....(760) 521-0096  
Connie Liccidone (chapter co-leader)...(310) 292-5381





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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253

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.

### Other Grief Support Websites...

<a href="http://thetearsfoundation.org">thetearsfoundation.org</a>	<a href="http://childloss.com">childloss.com</a>
<a href="http://goodgriefresources.com">goodgriefresources.com</a>	<a href="http://griefwatch.dom">griefwatch.dom</a>
<a href="http://bereavedparentsusa.org">bereavedparentsusa.org</a>	<a href="http://opentohope.com">opentohope.com</a>
<a href="http://healingafterloss.org">healingafterloss.org</a>	<a href="http://webhealing.com">webhealing.com</a>
<a href="http://survivorsofselfharm.com">survivorsofselfharm.com</a>	<a href="http://alivealone.org">alivealone.org</a>
<a href="http://taps.org">taps.org</a> (military death)	<a href="http://angelmoms.com">angelmoms.com</a>
<a href="http://save.org">save.org</a> (suicide/depression)	
<a href="http://pomc.com">pomc.com</a> (families of murder victims)	
<a href="http://grasphelp.org">grasphelp.org</a> (substance abuse deaths)	
<a href="http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub">www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub</a> (Suicide)	
<a href="http://Griefwords.com">Griefwords.com</a> (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 Co-LEADERS: Lori Galloway & Connie Liccidone

CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Konopasek

WEBSITE: Leo Liccaridone

### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik	Lori Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
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)

## Holiday Donation and Membership Update

Dear Compassionate Friends,

As we near the end of the year, it is time to update our mailing list to make sure we have your current information. Please consider making a donation to The South Bay/L.A. Chapter of Compassionate Friends. Our newsletter, phone line, website, outreach efforts and monthly sharing meetings are made possible by your generosity.

TCF is a non-profit organization and your donations are tax-deductible. More importantly, they are vital to the continued operation of our group. Please help in whatever way you can. We

are deeply grateful for your kindness. If you prefer to not make a donation at this time, please fill out the rest of this form so we can update our contact information. This will assist us in keeping you updated to Chapter events and activities.

Compassionate Friends is a "support group", which means that we help or support each other. If you feel that you have reached a point in your own grief where you might be able to help please consider donating your time.

Yes, want to help ...

A donation is enclosed in loving memory of

\_\_\_\_\_

I can volunteer to help our chapter in honor of my child. Please call to discuss my options.

I would like the newsletter online. My e-mail is \_\_\_\_\_

Please delete my name from the newsletter list.

My information is correct OR I need to update my information as follows:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For corrections or to add you child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter print your information the way you want it to be listed.

Child(ren)'s Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Death date \_\_\_\_\_

Mother/Father/Parents' Names (including last name) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking time to fill out this form and returning it to:

The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chapter,  
P.O. Box 11171 Torrance, CA 90510-1171



## 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 Dominique Oliver, May 1985 - March 2002 and Brandon Armstrong, July 1995 - July 1995.

Love, Mom

In loving memory of Johnny. Son, you passed away at such a young age. I miss you very much and it is very lonely without you.

Love and Blessings, Mom

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

Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

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

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Death date \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_

Tribute \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

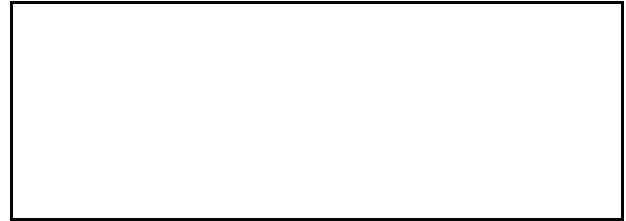
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**December 2021**

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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.**

**©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.