



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

MARCH 2022 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be March 3rd, the first ***Thursday***
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 ***Thursday***, Mar. 3rd meeting will start with "On Auto Pilot While Grieving."

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccia79@gmail.com for the link.

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 Connie at (310) 292-5381.

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The **Thursday, March 3rd** meeting will start with “On Auto Pilot While Grieving.” In early bereavement, our views are distorted, and quite frankly, we do not have the capabilities to remember much... We simply go on “auto pilot” to survive. Safety while grieving is something we may not be aware of. We are in a distracted and forgetful mind set while we are newly bereaved. And remember, TCF considers us “newly bereaved” for the first two to three years. Therefore, we need to slow down and focus on the safety side of life. While on “auto pilot” we can become a hazard to others and ourselves. Sleeplessness, fatigue, shock, and generally being consumed with the death, takes a toll we might not even recognize in ourselves. We welcome you to join us as we share some of the pitfalls that are normal and common while mourning the death of a child.

Safety Issues In Grief

During early grief, we are preoccupied, distracted, and forgetful. We lose our cars in parking lots, forget pots cooking on the stove and are careless with sharp objects. We are prone to dropping things and falling, all of which make us vulnerable to injury. Routine activities like driving a car now require extra diligence to ensure safety.

Driving While Grieving (DWG)

Shortly after returning to work following our daughter Kandy’s death, I parked my car in the faculty parking lot and walked the short block and a half to my building. As I walked, I realized I had been driving more than an hour and had no memory of having made the trip. There I was in a different time and place and didn’t know how I got there. I only knew of my actions after I parked the car. Oh, what has happened to my memory? This is scary, I thought.

At my next The Compassionate Friends (TCF) meeting, I shared my driving experience with the group. Kay responded, “If you think that’s bad, listen to this. I was driving along and suddenly realized I had no idea where I was going. In a state of panic, I pulled the car over to the side of the road. I was in full sobbing mode. After crying for I don’t know how long, I got myself together, turned around and drove back home. I stayed home until my husband could drive me where I

needed to go.”

Barbara, a friend of mine, shared with me how she sideswiped two parked cars when she was driving along a busy street. Another friend spoke of how she rolled through a stop sign, realizing only later the red sign meant she should have stopped. You might have your own tale of driving woes. We all agreed that we were fortunate that we didn’t hurt ourselves or anyone else. Suffice to say, DWG, as I call it, is not a traffic violation yet but can be dangerous to our health.

Recently, I read that driving while grieving (DWG) is as deadly as driving while intoxicated (DWI). Sharing these stories made me realize the importance of developing strategies for grieving parents and siblings to become mindful in our daily activities. A couple of things helped me when driving during that first year. I wrote a note to myself about where I was going and taped it to my instrument panel in the car. I also learned to keep the radio turned off because a favorite song or remark on the radio could trigger emotions and blinding tears. It helped me to have tissues handy because the tears always seemed to come when I was driving. It is advantageous to limit driving in the early months. When necessary, it is preferable to seek a ride with a friend or use public transportation.

In and Around the Home

One evening as I was cleaning up after dinner, I scraped leftovers into the garbage disposal. I pushed the food into the disposal with my right hand and reached with my left hand and turned on the disposal. The grinding sound of the motor brought me to my senses. Only then did I realize how dangerous it was to turn on the disposal while mindlessly putting in food.

Another safety issue involves the use of sharp instruments during food preparation. Take time to use the cutting board and only pick up a knife by its handle.

A friend shared with me her unsafe cooking experience. “One day I was cooking, not sure what, but I forgot about it. When I smelled something burning, I was still oblivious to what was happening. It was only when I got to the kitchen and found the wall near the range singed from the heat that I realized what had happened. The pan was burned dry, and the food turned into a crisp.” “Oh no!” “In my absent-mindedness, I nearly set the place on fire!”



All of us agree; forgetfulness is serious business. When cooking, it is important to avoid leaving the pot unattended. If you have to go to another room, turn off the burner. A kitchen timer can be a good cooking reminder when carried with you if you leave the kitchen. When cooking with oil in a skillet, never exit the room before taking the skillet off the burner.

Burns are another danger in the kitchen. Always remember to use potholders when handling hot pots and pans. By the same token, keep pot and pan handles turned away from the outer edges of the stove, where we can bump them.

To ensure safety, in and around the home it is necessary to mindfully focus on one task at a time. In our fast-paced world, we must avoid the tendency to multitask. Mindfulness is the process of bringing one's attention to the experience occurring in the present moment. Doing one thing at a time and doing so mindfully will help ensure we act in a safe and secure manner. A discussion of mindfulness is beyond the scope of this article, but I recommend a Google search for information on developing mindfulness.

Falls

When using a step stool/ladder to retrieve items from high places or to replace a light bulb, always think safety. Choose one with a hand support to help maintain your balance. Don't use a chair to reach high places, especially one with wheels. Suzanne said she puts a long strip of tape on areas and items where she had a prior injury. When she sees the tape, it alerts her to proceed cautiously. This advice is good for seniors as well. Spills on tile floors also increase the risk of slipping and falling.

Distraction can also make us vulnerable on our feet. We need to exercise care when walking from room to room if there are throw rugs on the floor. Additionally, we need to beware of door facings and furniture placement. Broken toes are a common injury, as we age, even when we are not grieving. We can wear closed-toe shoes to protect our toes and feet.

It is equally important to exercise care in crossing streets and highways. Carefully look both ways and cross only when the light says go. Remember passing cars approach quickly. Carrying and lifting heavy objects increase our risk for back injury. When lifting something heavy, move close to the object, bend the knees, grasp the item firmly and lift with the legs (abdomen and

buttocks), not the back.

Safety issues are equally applicable to the workplace. Depending on the nature of the job, the work environment may impose its set of risks for accidents and injuries. We must exercise care when using machinery, chemicals, and bulky items. In short, everyday activities pose increased risks to us when we are in acute grief.

In summary, grief causes us to be distracted and forgetful, predisposing us to serious injury. We are vulnerable to accidents while driving, walking and cooking. When we act mindfully, we stay in the present moment and focus on the one task at hand thus lowering our risk for accidents and injury.
--Coralease Ruff --Orange County NJ tcf nl



A Dream Deferred

Christine died on November 1992. She was six years old and in kindergarten, but at 35 pounds and in size 4 clothes, she looked much younger. Brain-damaged before birth by hydrocephalus, she needed

hours of occupational and physical therapy to learn to crawl, brush her teeth, ride her tricycle, zip her coat. I massaged her, coaxed her, pleaded with her, praised her—and watched her grow.

I never knew what skill might confuse Christine. She walked at thirteen months but did not crawl until fifteen months. She fed herself at eighteen months but could not hug herself until she was four. When she was two and a half, she was given a complete battery of tests. Her motor skills ranged from less than one year to average.

But Christine passed the speech test at a six-year-old level. At four she composed music and created lyrics to go with her melodies. She was a natural in math and, in true brat fashion, lorded it over her older brother who was not. "It's OK that you're not good in math," she would tell Bobby. "Boys can't do math." Or she would walk up to him as he struggled over multiplication, point at a problem with her tiny hand, say, "That's wrong. You'll just have to do it again," and run before he gave her a well-deserved slap.

Christine had so much potential. Her therapists, her teachers, her pediatrician, her neurosurgeon marveled at what she could do. She was humming nursery rhymes at thirteen months, humming Tchaikovsky at three. There were days

when I had visions of Christine as an adult, leading an orchestra as they played her Seventh Symphony or on stage singing her latest Country and Western hit.

And then at six it was all over. Her music—her songs—turned off. My dreams muted. And I found myself asking a question another poet in very different circumstances asked himself. “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it merely fester? Or does it explode?” (Langston Hughes, “Harlem,” 1953) Two seasons later I have a partial and paradoxical answer. It does both. It does neither.

These have been moments of intense anguish, when I marveled that my body could hold my mood and live. There have been times when sadness has softly sifted through my daily routines, shadowing my cooking and my speaking. But under both, deeper than the explosion of Christine’s unexpected death or the long sadness of her empty room, lies a certainty that Christine still exists, that we will one day be reunited. A part of me crossed with her into death, still walks in love with her. Yet it is not a budding musician I walk with—or a brat—or a handicapped child. She was all of these. She is none of these. I walk with her. Her soul’s whole now, bathed in light.

Relationships fade and change. Love lasts.
--Sandra Ball TCF, Salem NJ

A Mother’s Touch

My husband Jeff grew up in a family of hugging, kissing, foot-rubbing, back scratchers. Affectionate folks! In my family, on the other hand, we only scratched mosquito bites, and certainly not each other’s. Although we loved one another fiercely, we weren’t very demonstrative. A wink, a squeeze, a peck on the cheek, a poke in the ribs – that was mushy stuff for us. Touching another person was not something that came easily to me; that is, until my first child was born.

When the nurse placed that chubby cherub in my arms, the floodgates of my heart opened, and a torrent of overwhelming love poured out. I couldn’t keep my hands off the little dumpling! I learned first-hand what it means to “smother with kisses.” Caressing my precious baby came as naturally as breathing.



Other children came along, and I was reborn a certified, card-carrying cuddler. I learned how many of a mother’s day-to-day interactions with her children require her touch. Touching became a way of life for me as I fed, bathed, dressed, tamed cowlicks, and kissed ouchies. It’s funny, but one of the things I missed most after my son Blake died was tying his shoes. When he was alive, that chore was the bane of my existence. Blake’s shoes were perpetually untied or hopelessly tangled in knots that would have defied Houdini himself. I rejoiced when the shoe designers came up with Velcro closures, seeing an end to my nemesis. But would Blake wear those simple, convenient shoes? No way! Big boys wore shoes with laces, and most of all, he wanted to be like the big boys. So I armed my teeth, and kept tying and bending every fork in the house de-knotting. After Blake died, how my fingers ached to tie those little shoes one more time!

For most bereaved mothers I know, not being able to touch, to hold, to embrace our child is the most painful reality we have to face. The emptiness of our arms, the indescribable longing to have those arms filled again with our precious child, are almost more than we can bear. At first, when our grief is fresh, it may be hard, for us to touch anyone. We may close ourselves off emotionally, willing to touch or be touched, or to run the risk of being hurt so badly again. But mothers are touchers. With time, when the pain isn’t so intense, we may want to reach out once more.

None of us ever outgrows the need to be touched, no matter how old we are. And what can be so comforting as a mother’s touch! Today, if you can, touch someone. Do it in the memory of your beloved child.

-- Patricia Dyson TCF, Beaumont, TX In memory of Blake

Reflections of March

March is a month of renewal. The dormant trees begin to stir; the birds optimistically sing of spring; the winds, sometimes violent, wake us up; perhaps we need a “shake” out of our winter lethargy; an awakening.

There is that urge to plant, to nourish, to grow a tree or a flower. There is the primordial urge to feel your hands digging in the warming earth. Perhaps we plant because we know that someone will see

the results, as we have enjoyed the results of others' work. It could be called a debt of renewal, a repayment for that which we have enjoyed. As we nourish small seedlings, we visualize the end results.

That tree may die, as our children did. That tree may flourish beautifully, or it may meet ultimate disaster, but if that tree does well; it could be a source of great pleasure and of beauty for many coming years. We can believe that a seedling will be a glorious tree enjoyed by many. It's a nice dream. "To all things there is a season" and as life goes by, we simply cannot afford to miss the seasons, the renewals, the changes for new growth. Regardless of our griefs and regrets, life goes on, and we must try not to miss a season. Life simply will be, whether we participate or not. Someone will benefit from constructive growth, if we can find the energy to make the effort.

Severe grief, for a time, reduces our interest and our ability to participate fully in life. With a low energy level and little initiative and with our hopes for the future severely damaged, it requires great effort for the bereaved to learn to again enjoy the small things that make up most of our lives. Our hopes for the future are so damaged that there is little incentive to work today for the future. The things that exist today comprise the basics of our future. We run a risk and a danger of missing the good things that are to be, because we do not have the wish to participate in the things that are today.

Although we need a time of some withdrawal, some time to ponder the unanswered questions, some time to heal, we also need to be aware of the lives that are passing. Regardless of our grief, life simply goes on, and there is much good that we risk losing if we stay too long in a state of suspense of the present and a sad review of the past. A part of learning to "accept the unacceptable" is to learn to make the effort to sort out the good memories and take them with us into a future that will be happy again.

There comes a time when the harsh winter of our damaging grief will give way to some awakening; a time when we, like nature, can shake off some of the lethargy and see and feel the renewals life offers.

Our choice is to remember that we could not control the advent of disaster. We can only control our response. Our choice is now only in the way in which we respond to the necessity to pick up the threads of our lives and go on. We owe it to

ourselves to make a positive effort. We can hope that those buffeting winds of March can help us awaken to the renewals of spring and put the "winter of our disaster" in its place, now a part of our ongoing lives.

-- Dayton Robinson, TCF Tuscaloosa, Alabama



What Goes On At A Compassionate Friends Meeting?

A question that is asked frequently by newly bereaved

parents who have never attended a meeting is, "What do you do?" or rather, "What will you expect me to do?" In answer to the last question, we expect and require nothing more than your name. Our meetings are informal. We open the meeting with introductions by mentioning our name and child's name, but if you feel that you can not do this, it is okay, also. We have all, at one time or another, choked up on the mention of our child's name or the circumstances of his or her death.

Some people attend meetings several times and do not enter any discussion or voice their feelings. They absorb some ideas and discard others that do not meet their immediate needs. But, inevitably, someone around the table will say something that is tuned to the exact way you feel. Then the realization comes that one is among friends, people who really understand and care about them and their sensitive feelings. Some parents are more vocal from the start, and they find willing listeners who neither criticize or pass judgment on them. We most likely have the same feelings of anger, despair, longing, pains, and a multitude of others.

Now a word about crying. PLEASE don't stay away because you are afraid you will cry! We have all cried many times. Perhaps we've attended several months and didn't shed a tear. Then something is said or a memory comes back that brings tears to our eyes. Compassionate Friends can accept the gamut of feelings from tears to laughter. Laughter? Of course! We are, after all, human and our emotions are many and varied. If we can accept each other's feelings, this must include all ranges of emotions.

In the course of discussion, you may hear the answer to a question or problem that has been

plaguing you. Several parents may tell you how they handled the question of what to do with their child's possessions - clothes, toys, books, etc., or how they have gotten through holidays, birthdays, and other difficult days. Maybe you will pick up something that will be helpful in dealing with your surviving children's problems; how to deal with a seemingly uncaring relative or friends— to hurtful remarks, or how to answer the question "How many children do you have?" Sometimes what has helped one may not have worked for another, but what is important is the open and honest discussion and the chance to decide for yourself.

Please don't let the word *meeting* intimidate you. Perhaps we should call it a gathering. Whether our gathering consists of a program featuring a film, a speaker, a tape, or general discussion, please don't hesitate to join us! A parent who has "survived" the *loss* of their child will always be there to greet you and understand.
--Verdugo Hills, CA newsletter

Dad's Dog House

A dog house is a place where a dog will usually feel safe, and at times it is where he serves out a punishment. I have been known to get myself into the latter proverbial "Dog House." I expect it started way back before I ever got married to my wonderful wife, Gloria. Usually, I was aware of my predicament and at other times not so much. When our son Carson was about 9 years old he received a puppy. Rusty was a German Shorthair Pointer who stole our hearts but at times found himself in the proverbial "Dog House."

When Carson died, our world shattered like a glass Christmas ornament being smashed with a sledge hammer. Rusty wasn't immune to Carson's death. When Carson finally lost his battle to depression, he shut Rusty in a bedroom before he took his own life. It was, in a sense, a safe dog house for Rusty. He undoubtedly knew something was wrong when he heard the gun shot, smelled death filter through the house, and heard the horrific screams and yells when Gloria and I would later come home to find our son. I believe Rusty felt his own grief; not long after Carson died, he was diagnosed with cancer. He was only given 4 – 6 months to live.

All of us grieved the best we could. While my



heart ached, I would find myself giving Rusty a long hug, missing my son and loving his dog at the same time. I was consciously aware that Rusty was a living connection to our son and that he wouldn't be with us for very long. These hugs were usually when we were alone because Rusty wouldn't tell anyone about the depths of my pain. Perhaps it was the Grace of God, or the love Rusty received, or his awareness of how much we needed him after Carson's death, but he stayed with us for over two and a half more years.

Gloria and I will always grieve our earthly loss of Carson and will support each other the best we can. There are times when I want to grieve by myself. I am more willing to fully let go, to yell, to cry, when I'm not worrying about what others might think or having to appear strong for my wife or anyone else. It is much like being in my own proverbial "Dog House," but this dog house isn't because I've done or said anything wrong, it is because I want a safe place to grieve and heal.

I think everyone needs their own proverbial "Dog House," a place where we feel safe to grieve. I feel this is especially important for men as we are, more often than not, unwilling to fully allow ourselves to grieve around others. Hopefully we can find that place, a bathroom, garage, man cave, or our dog's dog house, where we can fully grieve, because grieving is necessary to heal. I still seek my dog house, but not as much as I used to — a sure sign of healing and growth. Now if I could only stay out of that other dog house.
--John Jordan TCF Minneapolis, MN

As Time Goes By... Twenty-Five Years Later

Somehow it never occurred to me twenty-five years ago on August 11 that I would see myself in the far distant future writing about this long journey without our Kenneth. I couldn't see surviving more than one day at a time. In the beginning when I saw other Compassionate Friends who were five-year survivors it was incomprehensible that they had even been able to go on living at all.

But here we are; twenty-five visits for every occasion and anniversary to the lake where we took his ashes. Death day, Birthday, Father's Day, Mother's Day, any day at all. Scatter our roses, release our balloons, drink in the beauty of nature while silently contemplating and communing

with his presence. We never say much, we don't have to, we know each other too well.

There have been lots of changes since that terrible day; joys of new grandchildren, a great grandchild. Other sorrows and leave-takings of precious family members and friends. Life having its way.

We go on, we live, we laugh, we cry. But never for a moment do we forget to bring Kenneth's precious memory forward with us in all of our celebrations, sorrows and everyday situations that make us recall his laughter and funny sense of humor. We look at his pictures, hear certain songs, see a reflection of him in a smile, eyes, hair, eyebrows, lips, DNA all over the place!

As August 11 is the anniversary of Kenneth's death, so October 30 is the celebration of his birth. Kenneth would have turned 49 this year. It seems impossible to equate that age with the fun-loving, happy 23 year old he will forever be.

And so we go on twenty-five years later. Some things have changed; the acute pain of new grief softens into the rosy scar of an old battle wound. Sometimes it unexpectedly screams like the phantom pain from a severed limb, but only some times. Most times that dull ache is overcome by the joy and thanksgiving of having this loveable, quirky, all too human among us. The circle is unbroken. Thanks be.

– Arleen Simmonds, TCF Kamloops B.C.

In loving memory of Kenneth Bruce Simmonds

To Share Or Not To Share

As year after year passes since the loss of our baby(ies), people assume we no longer think of them during the holidays. I am an extremely open person and will pretty much tell anyone anything about myself they want to know. I have never been private about my baby losses nor my health issues. And, I'm a very inquisitive person. I ask people a lot of questions about themselves, that I suppose comes across as nosy sometimes when really, I just care and am curious. I want to know others better and hear their stories. I share details and I like to find out details.

Although I'm very willing to talk about my two babies in heaven, I'm sometimes guarded because I know I could be setting myself up for an insensitive comment or a shocked and horrified facial expression.



When I was pregnant with Jonathan, I ran into a high school friend and her mom at a children's boutique. My childhood friend was also expecting a baby, so we excitedly talked for quite a while and discovered our due dates were almost the same day. A few months after Jonathan was stillborn, I took my then 4-year-old to get his haircut. While sitting in the salon waiting for my son, coincidentally my friend's mom walked in. After greeting her, I noticed her looking back and forth from my little boy getting his haircut back to me, and I knew she must be wondering where my newborn was. Sure enough, she sat down next to me and innocently said, "Where's your new baby?"

The hair salon was very small and most of the employees knew about my loss. When this woman asked the question, you could practically hear a pin drop. I felt as though all the hair stylists were holding their breath, waiting to hear how I was going to respond. I took a deep breath myself, and told her what happened. For some reason, I felt brave enough to pull a picture of Jonathan out of my purse to show her. She took the photo out of my hand and studied it for a second. She looked confused and questioned, "I thought you said he was stillborn." I said, "He was". With wide eyes she asked, "You mean he's dead in this picture?" I softly replied, "Yes." She literally tossed the picture in my lap and exclaimed, "Why would you show me that?!"

I learned that day not everyone is comfortable with talking about babies dying. People just want to close a blind eye and a deaf ear to the horror of infant death. That experience did not stop me from talking about Jonathan, but it definitely caused me to be more careful. Over the years I experienced more of those awkward and heartbreaking situations. That is why I am passionate about educating others concerning pregnancy and infant loss, and giving fellow loss moms permission to talk about their babies.

The death of our babies should not be a secret, considered shameful, or something we don't feel okay sharing. Therefore, it's up to us to teach those who have not endured the loss of a baby about our sorrow, explain that our babies are our children forever, and they will always be a part of our lives, no matter how many years go by or how many living children we may go on to have.

I know sharing your baby and your experience with others could set you up for more sadness, but it may also open the door for unexpected

compassion and understanding. Don't be afraid to talk about your baby, for you never know what story your listener may have to share with you. If they don't understand, shake the dust off your feet and try to move on. Not everyone will get it, but likely more than you think do sadly understand from either their own personal experience, or from someone close to them. Allow those who truly do care to love on you, and if needed, you certainly may be able to comfort them as well.

--Rebekah Mitchell, M.E.N.D. President and Founder (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death) Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support group. Mommy to Jonathan and Baby Mitchell

Seasoned Greivers...

Another March Is Here

March is a word that sends chills down my spine, not for the obvious reasons, but because it marks another anniversary of the death of my little girl. This is a special anniversary for me because she was 6 when she died, and this makes 6 years since it happened. It still hurts, but not anything like before. I miss her every day of my life, but the missing has a different quality than it did in the first few years. It lacks the desperation that it had then. It is more like a dull ache than a stabbing pain. I can think about her with a smile more often than with tears. I do know my grieving process well enough to know that March diminishes my coping skills for current problems. It takes less stress in March to set off a depression or a fit of anger. I've learned to expect that. My poor family has, too.

As most of you know, my mom has been very sick. I worry about her a lot. I'm also scared for me because I can't imagine my life without her. My experience with Colleen's death has taught me that its going to hurt like H... but it has also taught me that I WILL survive it. I've found lately that I need TCF in a different way now than before. I'm feeling fear of the future pain, instead of going through it when it happens. When I really need to vent I call Kathleen or Lisa or someone who understands. I've learned the hard way these last few months that my family can't be there for me because they are all facing (or hiding from) their own fears. At first I was angry at them, but a wise person gave me my own advice. (Don't you just hate it when



your own words came back to haunt you?) Lisa reminded me that I tell people that no one has the right to tell you how to grieve. I discovered that I was mad at my siblings for not being as frightened as I am. I realized that neither of them has been through the kind of agony that I've been through, and they are still believing that, somehow, "everything will be all right". We in TCF don't have the benefits of those blinders.

...My time with TCF has taught me more than any other experience of my life. I have made better friends here than anywhere else in my life. I will be grateful to all of you always...

Kath XXOO

--Lower Bucks County Chapter, Levittown, PA

Newly Bereaved...

But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough,
- been sleeping too much or not enough,
- noticed a change in appetite,
- felt no one understands what you're going through,
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often,
- bought things you didn't need,
- considered selling everything and moving,
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains,
- been unbearable, lonely and depressed,
- been crabby,
- cried for no apparent reason,
- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased.
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded,
- panicked over little things,
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done,
- gone to the store everyday,
- forgotten why you went somewhere,
- called friends and talked for a long time
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation,
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed,
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written

material,

- been unable to remember what you just read,
- you're NORMAL.

These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

--Joanne Bonelli TCF Greater Boise Area, ID

Friends and Family...

A Few Tips to Help Those in Grief

- * Call and send cards to let your grieving friend know that you are thinking of him.
- * Go visit the grave with your friend.
- * Listen as she speaks of her yearning and pain.
- * Allow yourself the freedom -and the gift to cry with her.
- * Remember the dates - write down when your friend's loved one was born and when her loved one died.
- * Send cards or call on these significant dates.
- * Buy a book on bereavement so that you can have a better idea of what your friend is going through.
- * Be kind and gentle with your friend. Grieving a loss is never easy. Practice patience.
- * Say your friend's loved one's name. Don't be afraid to share your memories of this special person.
- * Let your friend know how valuable he is to you. --reprinted from *The Expanded Sky*

Helpful Hint...

Tomorrow Will Be Better

When my son died, I felt like there would be no tomorrow. I didn't want a tomorrow. I wanted yesterday with its promise of joy and perfection. I wanted my son to be alive. But he was gone. Now, when life gets me down, I remember the joys of yesterday, think of all that I was given, take measure of all that still needs to be done, and I promise myself that tomorrow will be better because I will work very hard to make it better.

My grandmother often told me, "If you think you

can, you're right. If you think you can't, you're right. What do you think?" As a child I thought this was strange. As an adult, I know it to be true. Tomorrow will be better. Tomorrow I will, once again, tell my mind to stop the negative thoughts. And my mind will do exactly that, as I command my ship of grief.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF Katy, TX
Forever remembering my son, Todd Mennen

Welcome...

A New Member

I read your newsletter today
And I cried.

As a parent I never wanted to be a part of your group,
But now I am.
My precious Billy died only a month ago,
And my body and soul ache for him.

Your newsletter

Calms me--saddens me--consoles me--
Makes me feel less alone.

It helps and I know that now

I need a "Compassionate Friend".

--Pam Robbins, TCF, FT. Collins, CO

Editor's note: If you have never come to a meeting, we invite you to attend. Here you will find other bereaved parents who understand the depths of your pain and confusion. Our children have died from many different causes and at various ages. No matter what caused the death, we understand the pain involved. You will find your grief lessens the more you surround yourself with people who truly understand how we all grieve differently. Knowing what others have experienced helps you become prepared for the grief work involved with the death of a child.

Some people are ready and want to find answers to their questions and feelings right away. Others need to wait awhile before they are ready to come to a meeting. Come when you are ready. Bring a friend to lean on if you wish. If you just want the support of the newsletter and/or the phone friends, that is fine. Besides our regular meeting, our chapter has a group of Compassionate Friends who meet for lunch every Friday. Anyone is welcome to come. (One o'clock at Hoff's Hut (237 St & Crenshaw Bl.) This small group is less intimidating to some. We also have



great Compassionate Friends who have volunteered to be called at any time by bereaved parents who need to talk. Take advantage of these additional tools for dealing with the death of your child. As our motto states: "We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends". We encourage you to use any and all means available to help in your grief.



Book Review...

Grief As A Second Language, because I have been there and I have been through the worst...and I have survived. My book is a guidebook to grief. It gives you tips and tools just to get through every day, and that is important in the beginning. It is not specifically just for bereaved parents but, of course, I covered what happened to me and how I dealt with all the things that go with losing a child. You can buy it on Amazon. My hope and prayer is that my book will help a lot of people, to give them a glimmer of hope in a dark time of their lives. Sending you light and love...Sara Wolf Parker

Grass Stained Knees

My little boy started walking today
In the backyard, he fell down a few times
Got grass stains on his knees
I picked him up and hugged him,
He squeezed me back.
Several years later playing soccer
In the backyard, always me and Jake
Vs. Andy and Zach
Got grass stains on his knees
I picked him up & hugged him,
He squeezed me back.
Some years later I taught him
how to cut the grass
In the backyard, edge it, mow it,
sweep it up
Got grass stains on his knees
Too big to pick up, I hugged him,
He squeezed me back.
Now I go to his grave and I cut his grass
I trim it, I edge it, I water it, I care for it
Now grass stains are on my knees
I tell Jake I love him,
Can't wait until
He can squeeze me back again.
--Mat Summers, TCF, Orange County, CA
For his son, Jake, 6/21/91 ~ 9/2/07

Remembrance

What do we do when we love someone
But they have gone away
When all our days of bright sunlight
Have turned to shades of gray?
What do we say when no comfort comes
From words of love and hope
When efforts made seem pointless
As we fight each day to cope?
How do we act when we hear their name
And we cannot help but cry
This isn't fair, they were barely here
It's not time to say goodbye!
We promise them that they have made
A place within our hearts
Where they will live forever
Though we are far apart
We call upon the memories
As time allowed and then
Tuck them safely in our minds
To visit now and again
We cherish them as best we can
Each smile, each word, each look
We write the story they want told
On the pages of life's book
For most important is the vow
We honor when they're gone
Of sharing all they've given us
From that moment on
~Donna Gerrior TCF Pasco County, FL
In Memory of Rob

The Song Is the Same

Different are the circumstances
of our child's death,
Different are their names,
Different was their life and the length of it,
But their song was the same.
They lived for one brief moment in history,
Much too soon they were gone,
They left us here,
parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters,
To remember the gift of their life
and somehow go on.
Whatever the time that has passed for us,
Whatever the pain and grief that we claim,
We are all here together to remember our kids,
So your song becomes my song
and our song is the same.
--Barb Seth TCF Madison, WI



Our Children Remembered



Troy Akasaka
Born: 1/91 Died: 2/15
Parents: Jay & Sharon Akasaka

Josue Isaac Alvarez
Born: 3/04 Died: 6/07
Mother: Elizabeth Centeno

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 Albarez

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 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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

Bishop Michael Hernandez
Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21
Father: John Hernandez

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesse Robert Martinez
Born: 1/89 Died: 9/21
Father: Harry Martinez

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christopher Murphy
Born: 11/92 Died: 4/18
Mother: Deborah Murphy

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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 Pulislich
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18
Mother: Maria Pulislich
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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...



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

A Birthday Tribute for: **Alex J. Mantyla** **Mar. 1989 - Aug. 2008**



Happy Birthday, Alex!

It's hard to believe you would be 33 this year. We miss you every day but are grateful for all the memories we shared with you. They always

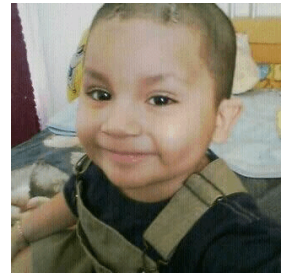
make us smile. Sometimes they can still break our hearts a little.

The memories of birthdays, holidays and our travel adventures are unforgettable, but it's the memories of our little daily adventures that we love the most. For example, I remember 5-25-92, the first time we measured your height on the edge of the laundry room door. You stood very straight as Dad marked the door. Your smile was so big when you realized you measured 3 feet and 3 inches and you were 3 years old.

As the years passed, that line on the door kept moving up. The last time we measured, you were 19 years old, 16 years from the first time! I think you did it just to humor me, though I noticed you checked out your progress from the year before. That was on 5-13-08. You measured 6 feet even.

If we ever sell this house, the realtor will have to explain to the new owners why a door is missing in the laundry room.

A Birthday Tribute for: **Josue Isaac Alvarez** **March 2004 - June 2007**



Happy Heavenly 18th Birthday... Today You would be my adult son, but forever my baby boy, my first born, my first everything. I'm happy I was blessed to spend 3 years and 3 months with you. I was there since the beginning until your last heart beat. I feel very blessed to be your Mom. A Mom of a true warrior, a true fighter. You fought until the last day but always ended up with a smile. Thank God for giving me the honor to be Josue's mom and thank you my son for choosing me to be your mom. My little handsome boy. I Love You Eternally.

Love, Your Mommy & Family!

For Siblings...



Question: How, After Experiencing Loss, Tragedy, Or A Broken Heart Does One Ever Trust Again?

Reprinted with permission from her daily blog.

Two months after my beloved brother very suddenly and shockingly died, I had to take a trip for work that required taking an airplane. I've never liked to fly. The idea of a metal object soaring two miles above the ground never made a whole lot of practical sense to me. I respect gravity.

Despite my dislike for flying I'd always been able to muster the courage to do it. But after losing Jim, I wasn't sure I'd be able. Friends, family and

colleagues tried to encourage me by sending me facts and figures about the safety of air travel. They quoted stats and data about airplanes being safer than beltways. They used words like “minuscule” and “microscopic” when describing the likelihood of my airplane having any kind of accident or incident at all. “Planes don’t fall out of the sky very often,” they said. “Thirty-six-year-old men in tip-top shape don’t die at their desks in the middle of the day either.” That was usually the end of the conversation.

See, nobody told me that heartbreak and grief have tentacles that wrap around our most deeply held conviction ... in my case, that the world was generally a safe place. Nobody told me that grief spreads like an infection from our hearts to our minds and then to our bodies; affecting what we think, feel, and how we move.

Nobody told me that grief fundamentally rearranges the internal compass in such a way that direction has little bearing (up is down, right is left, forward is backward). Nobody told me that grief feels so much like fear.

About this same time, and certainly as a result, I started to have terrible nightmares. Each night, the same terrifying entity chased me and I’d wake up breathless, sweating and often crying. I became afraid to sleep. Grieving and heartbreak requires sleep, so I took the concern to my spiritual director and pleaded with her to help me figure out what I was so clearly running from.

She looked at me gently and said, “Kate, the next time you have that dream, stop running. Turn around and ask the entity chasing you, what it wants.” I squirmed in my chair and told her I would try.

The next night, the entity returned. I began to run, but remembered her advice. With every bit of fear and trembling I turned around with my eyes shut yelled, “WHAT DO YOU WANT???” I woke my entire house.

The entity said nothing. It turned and walked away from me. My acknowledgment of the entity, my sheer admission of its presence had made it disappear. Perhaps, I thought, the same is true of fear.

It’s been almost ten years since my brother died and I’m still working toward building a new model of trust. After almost ten years, I’m aware that grief has been quiet for a while, but fear is the remnant that still takes me by surprise.

I don’t lie about my increased spirit of fear nor do I consider it a weakness. I would be foolish not to acknowledge that the loss of my brother changed me into a wildly tender-footed sojourner. I’ve learned that fear either makes us hard, bitter and angry, or it smacks us awake to the fact that every human being on the face of the earth will, in their lifetime, experience the breathless moment of heartbreak.

I’ve learned that although heartbreak feels lonely, it is actually a universal human experience and that in it

– we walk alongside every human being who has ever lived, or ever will. Somehow, in realizing that, the sting of heartbreak slightly, ever so slightly warms.

My advice: Don’t ignore fear when you feel it, because it is both a childish and selfish dinner guest. The more you fawn over it, the longer it will stay. The more you ignore it, the longer it will fight for your attention. But, by greeting it calmly and accepting it, the power it holds shrinks and doesn’t stick around too long.

Instead, treat it as a clue – a signal to the heart that something or someone deeply loved is unhappy or at risk. Hear it as a battle cry to the soul to plant your feet in courage, wrap your mind in love, gather some trusted people, slow the pace of your thinking and walk forward gently ... together.

The question was ... How, after experiencing loss do we learn to trust again?

By acknowledging that loss changes the way in which we move through the world, and being proud of that gentle shift because of the way it enlivens our compassionate hearts. By giving ourselves grace to take as much time as we need to do what we need. Racing to heal ourselves is usually a way to sabotage the healing.

By choosing tenderness and compassion over judgment and anger, and remembering the company of people who walk with us. By knowing that we’ve survived heartbreak once and that we would survive it again. And finally, by remembering that every human being on the planet and through history knows the sting of loss, of grief, of heartbreak. We know what it feels to be heartbroken and lose, and we know we will feel it again ... and yet, we still have the courage ... to plan.

And THAT makes us remarkably, hopefully, beautifully, loving ... creatures.

--By Kate Randall Benner TCF Atlanta, GA

For Grandparents...



Grandma’s Letter To Payton

Dear Payton,

So much has happened since I last wrote. The space of time between these letters grows. It has been almost a year now. In that time your mom and dad sold the house where you were born. They moved leaving behind the Blue Spruce tree that we planted for your first Christmas. Your big sister Mel wanted to dig up the spruce and bring it along, but it’s grown into a big tree and now is owned by a family who never knew you. It hurt to leave it behind. Your mom and dad moved away from the closed door to your room, all the toys, the swing and the rocking chair shut out of sight. They left with your dog Tilly and big sister Mel.

You have a new baby sister, now sixteen months old. You were barely sitting up when you left. Your baby sister is running now, saying her first words and learning the power of "No, me do it!"

We celebrate your birthday by walking around Lake Harriet, followed by a barbeque and raffle to raise money for the charity that donated funds for your funeral. This was our 10th annual walk. The funds were sorely needed. There were hospital bills from your delivery and then the bill for your pink casket and the mortician.

Last year your baby sister was too small to go on the walk. This year she sat in the stroller wide eyed and opinionated, arms up whenever we stopped. She wanted to dig on the sandy shore around the lake. To her you are the angel sister in heaven. You two will not measure yourselves back-to-back against each other. You two will not share memories held by only the two of you. She goes to kindergarten soon, another milestone you didn't have.

We love watching her grow, remembering you each step of the way. She looks so much like you; brown hair, big brown eyes, a wide smile. At family gatherings we're aware of what would have been if you hadn't stopped breathing that day. That there is a name for it, SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, offers no comfort. During your baby sister's first year, it was that danger that kept us awake at night, vigilant, hovering over her sleep. We got her through that first risky year and celebrated a grand birthday. She was safely on a level playing field with healthy one-year-olds.

You are the spark inside her, the shadow she casts on a sunny day. We have loved you all your life. We love you now. As she grows we celebrate the two of you.

Grateful for the blessing of your life,
--Grandma Janet Tripp, Payton's Grandmother
TCF Minneapolis, MN

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

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Jan.1st for Feb. 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 Connie at (310) 292-5381. 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 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
- Bonnie Mantyla (chapter co-leader).....(310) 530-8489
- Linda Zelik.....(310) 370-1645
- Mary Sankus.....(310) 648-4878
- 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 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 (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...

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)	

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

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 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Liccaridone
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Kristy Konopasek
 WEBSITE: Leo Liccaridone



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Cheryl & Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
Connie & Leo Liccaridone	Kitty Edler
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	Susan Kass
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla	

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--

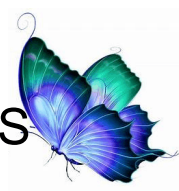
7 AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings (open depending on moderator availability)
 5 PM PST: Loss to Substance Related Causes
 5 PM PST: Pregnancy/Infant Loss
 6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

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

Love Mom

In loving memory of my beautiful daughter, Jillian Katnic, March 1987 - October, 2018. Happy 35th Birthday. I miss you more than ever.

Love, Mom

In loving memory of Megan P. Rexroad, December 1991 - October 2015. I miss you every moment of every day.

Love, Mom

In loving memory of Emily Matilda Kass, June 1995 - March 2006. Missing you forever.

All Our Love, Mom & Jessica

In loving memory of Danielle Mosher, August 1978 - June 2015. Danielle, you left us many years ago but not one day goes by that we don't think of you and miss your voice, your smile, your laugh...

And in loving memory of Patrik Slezinger, January 1989 - August 2017. Patrik, you brightened our life every day you were with us and your daughter is so much like you.

Missing you, Paul & Rosemary Mosher

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 _____

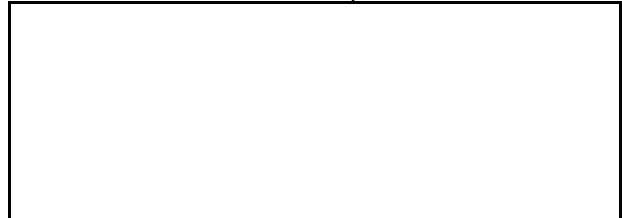
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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March 2022

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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 new address,
please contact us.