



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

May 2022 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be May 5th, 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***, May 5th meeting will start with Mother's Day, Holidays, Events and Starting New Traditions.

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.

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (310) 530-8489
j.mantyla@att.net
Leo & Connie Licciardone (310) 292-5381
ConnieStar58@gmail.com

The National Office of TCF
P.O. Box 3696
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
Toll free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

The **Thursday, May 5th** meeting will start with “Mother’s Day, Holidays, Events and Starting New Traditions.” After a child dies and special events come up in our life, we need to establish new ways to handle these special days without our children here with us. Join us as we share ways we have found to make holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and special days meaningful again and some of the ways we continue to celebrate our departed children’s lives.

Mother’s Day



Dear Friend,

I miss my child every day. This grief of mine will never leave me, and honestly, why should it? I love my child more than I ever could have imagined, and yes, I do mean present tense “love”. It is excruciating knowing that my child will never return to my arms. However, a mother’s love for her child doesn’t require physical presence; this can be proven by the fact that most mothers love their children well before they are even born. I will love my child forever, and therefore, I will grieve my child forever. This is just how it goes.

I know it’s difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to “get better” or return to “normal.” However, I actually am normal. I’m just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother’s Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.

My grief is like the weather. Some days it’s calm, quiet, maybe even a little sunny. Other days it’s a devastating storm that makes me feel angry, exhausted, raw, and empty. I wake up in the morning and wonder – “Am I even alive at all? And if so, how am I supposed to make it through this day?” This is why when you ask me how I feel about Mother’s Day, all I can say that it depends. Of course, I’m going to try my best to cope with the day, but while you’re hoping that your Mother’s Day picnic doesn’t get spoiled by actual rain, I’ll be praying that the grief storms stay at bay.

Like many things in a grieving mother’s life, Mother’s Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with them. On the other hand,

the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life’s purpose, and my best friend – is intense. Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am a mother to a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you’ve never met. You can’t ask me about their school year, or how they’re liking piano lessons, or whether they’ve chosen a major in college. In my mind, I’ve imagined my child doing all these things. People don’t realize that I grieve each of my child’s milestones, knowing they didn’t get the opportunity to experience these special days.

Most people don’t know how to validate my child’s place in the world or my ongoing role as my child’s mother. This is a difficult concept for others to grasp. Heck, sometimes even I grapple with the answers to questions like “Do you have children?” and “How many?.” I know many bereaved mothers, like me, long for these questions to have straightforward answers.

Sadly, mothers who have experienced the death of their only child may even wonder whether they get to call themselves a mother at all in broader society. So, in addition to the pain of grief, these mothers have to cope with a sense of being left out, forgotten, and ignored. Can you imagine how that might feel? I think it must be like being stabbed through the heart and when you turn to others for help they say “What blood?” “What knife?”

Then, for mothers who have surviving children, there is this gem of a comment – “Don’t forget, you’re lucky to have other children.” Please let me assure you, a mother does not forget any of her children. This mother loves each and every one of her unique and special children in unique and special ways, but one of her children has died and so her love for this child looks a little untraditional. Mothers do not have a finite amount of love to be shifted, divided, and spread around depending on the number of children they have on this Earth. So please be careful with your comments, because it’s difficult enough for grieving mothers who often feel torn between feeling joy and happiness for their living children and grief for the child who has died.

All that said, you asked me what it’s like to grieve a child on Mother’s Day, so here’s what I have to say: This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may

be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

Beyond that, acknowledge me as a mother. It makes me feel forgotten and as though my child has been forgotten when people act as though my child never existed. Also, I can sense that people feel uncomfortable talking about my child and I constantly feel like the elephant in the room, but it doesn't have to be this way. Honestly, I find it really comforting when someone talks about my child. I love hearing their name spoken out loud! I love hearing stories about them. Maybe you know a story I've never heard, or maybe I've heard it a hundred times before, but it really doesn't matter to me. Your acknowledgment alone is one of the greatest Mother's Day gifts you could give me.

I guess while I'm offering my two cents, I also have something to say to my fellow bereaved mothers. No one has it all figured out, but I've learned a few lessons along the way. If you're worried about Mother's Day, you're not alone. Try not to get overwhelmed or wrapped up in anxiety. You may actually find that the anticipation of the day is worse than the day itself. You may want to plan a whole day of activities just to stay busy, or you may feel like doing nothing at all. There is no "right" way to handle Mother's Day – but do try to plan ahead a little. You may want to reach out to others who are struggling with the day and, if you can, it always helps to face the day with people who love and support you.

Whatever you do, believe you will make it through the day. With time, the grief storms will grow smaller and less frequent and you will find a little more balance and room to breathe. Believe you will be okay and have hope that in the future you will find yourself in a place where you can grieve and celebrate on Mother's Day all at the same time.

Let's take care of each other, M.
–Western Australia TCF
whatsyourgrief.com/grieving-a-chil

"Turn - turn - turn" are the words of a song that tell us here is a season for everything under the sun, "a time to be born; a time to die." This song is based on the quote from



the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes that gives people permission to move on in life. One of the ways I've watched the members of TCF experience grief is their use of the seasons to create new memories and recapture some of their favorite events with new rituals. Spring may be a good time to think about new celebrations. Here is a list of things to think about any time of the year when you are faced with planning rituals for yourself and your family:

Plan ahead. Don't let the day just happen, Be specific. Write down the feelings associated with the special times. Reach out to other family members and friends. Take time alone to read, walk, listen to music, etc.,. Plan some time to laugh and have fun with others. Create a new ritual by using candles, balloons, stories, religious ceremonies, and gifts for others. Memorials, contributions, scholarships, TCF donations, flowers given in memory of your child are good ways to handle special days. Take trips. Visit with family members. Find new places to see. Share special collections. Bring photos, ornaments, scrapbooks, and other mementos to share with family members.

Starting new rituals takes planning, it's important to consider other family members' feelings too, and include them in the planning, Explain why you are doing things differently, and talk about your feelings on these special occasions.

Traditions start the first time you plan a ritual that can be performed over and over without too much change. Start with very simple activities, and add to them as your healing starts and when it feels right to do so.

--Therese Goodrich, Former national executive director of The Compassionate Friends

"Anniversary Date in Heaven"

Your Anniversary date in Heaven is growing near,
And I miss you so much with each passing year.

I think of you and my heart constricts in pain,
And I question whether I'll ever be whole again.

I wonder if you count the time as I do.

Since you left us for Heaven - is it still new to you?

Or does time count in Heaven like it does for us here?

Do we seem far away to you? - or do we feel near?

So many questions arise in my mind.

Questions like:

"Do you miss us since you left us behind?

Is it possible for you to be sad? - for you to feel pain?

Do you question why this happened?

Do you feel the same?

The answers to my questions will be mine someday

As I cross to where you are –
through Heaven's pearly gates.

Then I will know the joy that you experience there,
And we will be together, forever in Heaven so fair!

Oh, how I wished God had made a plan,
Where loved ones in Heaven could reach down to man.

Just one simple word - just one gentle touch -

But who am I fooling?

Once would never be enough!

There are no words to describe the unspeakable pain,

Of losing a child - Our loss is God's gain!

So, Happy anniversary in Heaven,
my precious child, so dear.

I'm so glad you're there with God ---
if I can't have you here.

--Faye McCord, (Newsletter editor, Jackson, MS
TCF) -in loving memory of my son, Lane McCord

The Butterfly

One day in April, exactly eight months after my daughter died, I walked out my front door on my way to visit a neighbor who lived across the street and at the other end of the block. It was one of those rare sunny days that occasionally occur in early spring. As I started down the steps I noticed a tiny, brightly colored butterfly sitting on the bush by my porch. I immediately noticed it because it was so beautiful and because it is so unusual to see any kind of butterfly in Western Oregon that time of the year. To this day I can't tell you what kind of butterfly it was. The closest I can come is to identify it as a Painted Lady.

At any rate, as I walked down the steps the butterfly took off and flew right next to me. It stayed with me as I crossed the street and then



I turned and walked down to the corner. I stopped then because it suddenly occurred to me that something unusual was happening.

The butterfly landed on a bush right next to me and sat quietly while I watched it. Then I put my index finger out and the butterfly flew over and landed on my finger. We looked at each other for at least two minutes and then a young woman with a baby in a stroller walked by. The butterfly flew off and I watched it fly down the street into the sunlight. I finally lost sight of it as it flew beyond my line of vision.

What did all this mean? I suppose if I think about it long enough I could come up with a scientific explanation, but I choose to believe that this was my daughter coming back to say goodbye and to let me know that she is happy and free from all the pain she endured while she was still here. By the way, my daughter's name was Nina (which, of course, means little one) and she had a small butterfly tattooed on her shoulder.

--Gail Sittser, Portland OR

I'll Hold You In My Heart Until I Hold You In Heaven

When a child dies, a parent is still tied to that child. Souls tied together across universes. It doesn't matter the age when they passed. It doesn't matter how long ago it happened. It doesn't matter—none of it. Their souls are forever tied.

That's the love of a parent. That's the love that is more powerful than death. That's the heart that breaks and keeps breaking until their arms are filled again. It knows no discrimination based off of age, health, or time, it just is, and it always will be. Their souls are forever tied, and there's nothing that can break them. That's the beauty of unconditional love.

-- Scribbles & Crumbs

Compassionate Friends National Conference



TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX - August 5-7, 2022

Almost 3 years after losing my almost 18 year old son Brayden, I am still searching. I was skeptical about attending TCF National Conference but went anyway. I don't like crowds or big hotels but I was in one. I didn't want to see Bray's picture

with the 1200+ pictures that loving parents wore in memory of their cherished children. Not wanting him to be left out, I wore it anyway.

It was surreal walking down the long hallway of the hotel in the morning to catch the elevator to attend classes to learn how to live again because Brayden had died. My legs felt similar to the first steps I took after Bray passed away; weightless, weak, like I was floating. But I kept walking and breathing and it got better.

I attended helping sessions put on mostly by parents who had lost children themselves and wanted to help me and others in dealing with this monster called grief. One session gave me researched and proven suggestions on how to heal. Another gave me hope that my child is alive in spirit. Another taught it is OK to be angry but it's what I do with the anger that matters. One session of a panel of siblings that had lost a brother or sister confirmed that I was doing the right things with my surviving son Daniel. Yeah!

One reminded us of how guilt can "zap our energy/strength" and "empty our tank" if we let it, and by sitting with and listening to others we can help them and ourselves.

I totally related to a father giving a session called "Love, Laughter, and Power Grieving" because both of our sons had loved to play football. He caught my attention immediately and everything he said resonated with me...feeling guilty because we are still here. "Every damn thing" his younger child does, his deceased son will miss.

We will never "get over it." He suggested taking some power back, that tears = love and are good. His tears were sorrowful but now flow from acts of love for his son/people remembering him. He said to find something that "will allow you to build and be creative." He works as a comedian and said his humor has saved him. I believe it!

My heart broke many times over as I cried for strangers as I looked into their eyes and listened to their stories. I met loving, supportive, and inspirational people. A mother and her daughter walked me to a classroom, another asked me to join her table at lunch, another told me I was doing well. We are all searching for what we lost/loved, but can't have. We will ALWAYS love our children and we have to find purpose again or we will literally die. Not truly living is dying too. The Compassionate Friends lets us know we are worthy and deserving of life/love and having a

future; even if we never fully feel that way or believe it ourselves.

--Jeanne Thornbury, TCF Cincinnati North Chapter Editor's Note: The Compassionate Friends National Conference is back. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Houston, Texas, during the weekend of August 5-7, 2022. (See pg 18 for more information.)

Surviving The Suicide Of My Son



I survived it. The worst day of my life was November 21, 2019, at 1:03 AM, when the coroner told my husband and me our son, Johnny, had died by suicide a few hours ago, on November 20. In the immediate days following, I alternated between screaming, sobbing, and being unable to talk to anyone other than my immediate family. Food was meaningless and sleep impossible. Tremendous nightmares would come. Some days I felt like I was drowning. Feelings of guilt surfaced no matter how hard we had tried to help Johnny.

How did I survive it?

1. I leaned on my faith. My son became psychotic after dabbing high potency marijuana concentrates called wax and shatter. During this immense time of grief, I needed hope, and I found it by leaning on my faith. My belief that I will see Johnny again in heaven gave me the strength to continue on days when I thought I couldn't get out of bed. My faith was my solace.

2. I put my energy into a cause related to my loved one's death. I wrote an email to a friend after Johnny died, "I must forge ahead despite my pain and try to give some sort of meaning to losing Johnny." So, this became my mantra. We live in Colorado, where these products are readily available to 18-year-olds who get "med cards" by making up a chronic condition. I use my determination and passion as a source of energy.

I started a 501c3 nonprofit, Johnny's Ambassadors, to educate parents and teens about the dangers of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide. Helping others has been a great source of comfort and healing for our family.

Johnny's death has not been in vain, because sharing his story with others is saving lives.

3. I did something creative and new. I invested my time into creative outlets, such as writing a book,

blogging, posting on Facebook, creating an online curriculum to teach teens about the harms of marijuana, giving presentations, and hosting webinars. I drew upon the skills I'd learned in business over the past 30 years. I forced myself out of my fetal position and interacted with others, even when I didn't "feel" like it. Their love reflected back to me and bolstered my energy. Maybe you could write a song. Draw a picture. Take photos of the world around you. Make a scrapbook.

4. I shut down my negative self-talk, blame, and guilt. This was easier said than done. I've been told that many parents experience moments of self-doubt, blame and guilt. When this negative self-talk started, I knew I needed to really consider what I was telling myself. I realized we did the best we could, and Johnny's death was not our fault. We could only go so far in trying to keep Johnny safe from his choices. But at some point, his life was out of our hands, and you can't control another human being. We reframed guilt as regret.

5. I found support groups and built relationships. My husband and I were intentional in facing our grief head on and actively sought help. We have met the most incredible people in this journey. We attended a Parents of Children of Suicide meeting just three weeks after Johnny died, followed by a Survivors of Suicide group that met at a hospital, a Griefshare program at a local church (first in person and then online), and weekly couple and individual grief therapy. We developed relationships with other people and organizations who are allies in our missions and purposes. I never would have met the wonderful people now in my life without going through this tragedy.

Stay close to your life partner and friends. My husband and I decided we could not get through this without each other. We made this child together and must keep this son—forever 19—with us.

Slowly, in the months that followed Johnny's death, using the techniques above, I started to breathe again, and the nightmares stopped. I still cry nearly every day; however, over a year and a half later as of this writing, I have found joy again and look forward to the future. I have an amazing husband, two incredible surviving children, and wonderful friends. I grieve Johnny deeply, but I'M ALIVE. After surviving that, I know I can survive anything. And I know you can survive it.

--Laura Stack is the Founder et. CEO of the nonprofit, Johnny's Ambassadors, which she

formed after her son, Johnny, died by suicide after becoming psychotic from dabbing high-THC marijuana concentrates. Johnny's Ambassadors now educates parents and teens about the dangers of today's high-THC marijuana on adolescent brain development, mental illness, and suicide. She shares Johnny's warning and marijuana research in her new book, *The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story*.
© Andrew Mayovskyy/stock.adobe.com
TCF We Need Not Walk Alone

All My Children How My Miscarriages Fit Into My Family



When people ask me how many children I have, the answer seems obvious: three. But there are four little ghosts tugging at my jeans when I say this, traces of people who started to grow inside me and then gave up.

My first baby girl arrived healthy and full term, but in the next two years, I had two miscarriages. At the time I wondered if I had failed my babies. Did I have some rare baby-rejecting disease? Or perhaps I hadn't been welcoming enough? When I'd worried that a new child might somehow wreck our lovely one-child family dynamic, did the wee embryo inside me slink off into the afterlife, knowing its mother didn't love it unconditionally?

I became wrapped up in this kind of thinking. For example, with my first miscarriage, I had started to bleed heavily while I was on the subway on my way to work. I got off the train instantly and found a bathroom, where the sheer volume of blood confirmed my worst fears – my tiny new baby was slipping out of me. I called my doctor from the noisy station, and she gloomily told me there was nothing she could do to stop what nature had started.

My solution? Never take the subway again and instantly stop working. I became a stay-at-home mother, not because of some long-planned transition, but because I was afraid of disaster – that the subway and working cause miscarriages. I planted a garden in our backyard with obsessive fervor. Something must take root, I decided. If not my baby, then a whole lot of sunflowers! Do you hear me, God?

With the next pregnancy, I was intensely careful. I stayed far away from the subway. I wouldn't lift my child. I remained horizontal every

chance I got. And everyone was so hopeful for me. When I threw up all the time, everyone told me that was a good sign. When I saw the baby's heart beating, that was a really good sign. When my uterus grew large and my belly started to pop, all signs pointed to "baby on board."

I took my husband with me to the 10-week ultrasound, so he could share my joy and see the heartbeat too. The physician's assistant paused a long time while we waited for her to turn the screen around for us to see our new baby's heartbeat. But there wasn't one. The baby had stopped growing a few weeks earlier.

Some people told me (in slightly nicer words) that it was a doomed embryo we lost. But any mother in the world – whether or not she has living children – will tell you that whenever she is trying to grow a life in her body, it is a baby. For me, each of these babies was a grand hope, a gorgeous being, and the product of love – not a mixed-up set of chromosomes that wasn't intended to grow. Each was a heart that started to beat, and then stopped: They were my children.

I lay there on the doctor's table gasping like a goldfish, as I was told I would be scheduled for a D&C to remove the dead tissue from my uterus. I kept repeating, "Are you sure? Are you sure? Are you sure?" Then my husband took me home where I clung to the side of our bed like it was a sinking ship and howled in agony.

I saw a grief counselor every week for more than a year after that, and with her my grief became somewhat acceptable. I learned to live with the notion that a baby had started, and then died, inside of me. I named her Eve, and I imagined all the milestones she would have hit over the next year. The counselor guided me through my next pregnancy, which miraculously went past term and resulted in an actual baby, my second child. I stared at her in bald wonder, thinking, "Did this really happen? Is it safe to hope you're really alive?"

When our third healthy baby girl was born 15 months later, I began to believe that my luck had really turned around. Despite our horrible journey through miscarriage, I had three terrific little girls. But we couldn't resist the urge to try for one more baby.

When I got pregnant again, at 40, I maintained as much skepticism as I could. I didn't buy one stitch of maternity clothing, let alone baby clothes.

I also insisted on weekly ultrasounds. I didn't want to be tricked into gestating a dead embryo for one minute longer than necessary. The movie quote that ran through my head constantly was from Beverly Hills Cop. Every time I saw a flickering heartbeat on the ultrasound monitor, I thought, "That's nice, but I'm not gonna fall for a banana in the tailpipe."

By the time I plopped myself up on the exam table for the final ultrasound of my first trimester, I was starting to get excited. But a minute later, the doctor's face fell. There was no heartbeat. Another little baby had died at precisely the same moment her sister had years before. So I cried, and my doctor cried, and we all met the next morning at the hospital for a D&C to bring an end to another chapter. But a month later I needed another D&C because my enthusiastic uterus continued to build up tissue to care for a baby that had long since been removed.

This past spring, I was fortunate to find myself pregnant again – an exciting surprise. But two weeks later, just before I was scheduled to start my regimen of hawkish ultrasounds, I started bleeding like crazy and another flickering hope sputtered out. I'm past the unrealistic way of thinking now, and I faced these late miscarriages with a sad pragmatism that saved me the unnecessary guilt. I imagine they were all girls, these four babies who stopped growing inside me. They feel like my children. Intellectually I know that they were arrangements of chromosomes ill suited for life, but the moment I saw each positive pregnancy test my heart bloomed larger and wider. And when those babies died, I was crushed.

How does a woman describe the feeling of losing a child in utero? It is grief, but not the same kind of grief as losing a child who has walked on this earth. From that grief, I felt certain I would die. It is the most gut wrenching sorrow I have ever known, and I have no plans to forget those four little ones who might have been.

I met a man recently who told me proudly that he has seven children. And as I shook his hand and congratulated him, I said silently, "So do I."

--Erica Kain Posted on Seleni.com
<http://www.seleni.org/advice-support>



Seasoned Greivers...

Chasing After Closure



I keep reading in the newspapers about survivors of tragedy or death seeking "closure." Yet no one really defines what closure means, whether it is possible or how to get there.

For many in our society, closure means leaving grief behind, a milestone usually expected within a matter of weeks or months. Closure means being "normal," getting back to your old self, no longer crying or being affected by the death. It means "moving on with life" and leaving the past behind, even to the extent of forgetting it or ignoring it. For we who have experienced death, this kind of closure is not only impossible but indeed undesirable.

Closure, if one even chooses to use the term, is actually more a process than a defined moment. The initial part of closure is accepting the reality. At first, we keep hoping or wishing that it weren't true. We expect our loved ones to walk through the door. We wait for someone to tell us it was all a huge mistake. We just can't accept that this person has died, that we will never physically see them again on earth, that we will not hear their voices, feel their hugs, or get their input on a tough decision.

Usually it takes weeks or even months for the reality to finally sink in. We come to know, in both our heads and our hearts, that our loved one has died and is not coming back. We still don't like it, but we accept it as true.

As the reality sinks in, we can more actively heal. We begin making decisions, and start to envision a life different from what we had planned before, a life in which we no longer expect our loved one to be there. We grow, struggle, cry and change. We form fresh goals. We face our loneliness. We feel the pain and loss, but except for short periods of time, we are not crippled by it. We also make a shift in memory. Memories of our loved ones, rather than being painful as they were at first, sometimes make us smile or even laugh.

This healing phase takes a very long time, and involves a lot of back-and-forthing. We alternate between tears and joy, fears and confidence, despair and hope. We take two steps forward and one step back. We wonder whether we'll ever be truly happy again, and often doubt that we will.

Eventually we realize we are taking the past,

with all its pain and pleasure, into a new tomorrow. We never forget, and in fact we carry our beloved with us; he or she is forever a cherished part of who we are. We are changed— by the experience of having loved this person, by the knowledge of life's transience, and by grief itself. We become different and hopefully better, more compassionate, more appreciative, more tolerant people. We fully embrace life again, connecting, laughing and loving with a full heart.

Still, there is no point of "final closure," no point at which we can say, "Ah, now I have finally completed my grief." Or, "Yes, now I have healed." There is no point at which we will never cry again, although as time goes on the tears are bittersweet and less common. Healing is a lifelong process, one in which we often don't even realize we are healing until we look back and see how far we have come.

"Closure"? I don't think so. Acceptance-yes. Peace-yes. Hope-definitely. But putting a period behind the final sentence and closing the book on it? No! Life and love are much too complex for that. The story does not end; instead it awaits the next chapter.

By Amy Florian, Hoffman Estates, Illinois
 amya@amyflorian.com~reprinted with permission
 from Grief Digest, Centering Corporation, Omaha,
 NE 402-553-1200

Newly Bereaved...

Riding The Waves

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

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

Finally, the tide recedes again, but I still cannot move. I am bone tired from my past efforts I am aware of noise around me I can hear the chirping

birds, and feel the warm sun. The laughter of children beckons me to once again open my eyes. Helping hands are touching me, encouraging me to rise up. Gently hands soothe me with their light touch. Warm hugs embrace me. It feels good, for a while, until the voices drift on down shore, leaving me alone with the setting sun. I marvel at the beauty and thank God for His presence.

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

Friends and Family...

Bill of Rights for the Bereaved:

We have the right to express our grieving in our own way.

We have the right to know that grieving is slow, hard work and to move through it at our own pace.

We have the right to express our feelings about grief and to explore them.

We have the right to forgive ourselves for the things we think we "should" have done or "might" have done and realize that what we did in that moment of time was based on the information at hand and that we did the best that we could with the knowledge we had.

We have the right to be ourselves and to recognize our strengths and our limitations.

We have the right to participate actively in our mourning, to remember the past with fond memories and to allow ourselves to enjoy our lives again.

We have the right to move forward and to speak of our pain, whether that makes people uncomfortable or not.

We have the right to go back and forth in our grieving; some days making progress and other days slipping back.

We have a right to express our emotions and to have others bear witness to our story.

We have the right to believe that we will have a whole life again!

-- *The Healing Power of Grief* by Gloria Lintermans & Marilyn Stolzman, Ph.D., L.M.F.T.

Helpful Hint...



"People will tell you to 'move on.' Instead, think of your life as 'moving forward', forward WITH your loved one beside you in spirit and in your heart. It's unthinkable to move on without them. They are forever with you, closer than you know."

--Ashley Davis Bush

Welcome...



Welcome!

All bereaved parents, grandparents, and adult siblings are welcome at our support group meetings. Here you will find comfort, caring people, and most of all – HOPE. Coming to the first meeting is hard, but you have nothing to lose and much to gain. For many it is the first real step toward healing. Although it may seem overwhelming, we encourage you to come to several meetings to give yourself a chance to become comfortable. The hope of The Compassionate Friends is that those who need us would find us and that those that find us would be helped. TCF also provides information to help members be supportive to each other. We are not professional counselors. We are bereaved families who want to help each other.

--TCF Tucson Chapter

Book Review...



OPTION B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant. Although Sheryl's grief story is about the loss of her husband, and each loss is personal and unique, we all face the challenge of finding purpose, meaning, and joy again. When grieving a major loss, it is painfully clear that "option A" is no longer available. We can't get our child or sibling back. We have to face that reality and try our hardest to make the best of "option B." Our loved ones changed us by their presence, and now we

are realizing how profoundly they continue to change us by their absence.

The tools Sheryl and Adam provide, are not all that different from other grief books, but I found it helpful to contemplate her idea of "post-traumatic growth." We have heard of PTSD, but Sheryl says that she has actually grown and become more grateful, more present, more alive, and more aware of how precious and short life is.

In my early days of grief, ideas like that didn't make a lot of sense to me, but over time, I have come to see signs of growth in myself also. I appreciate things that I used to take for granted. I can have fun and laugh again. I can find little moments of joy each day, and this focus helps me move in a positive direction. I believe that we all gain perspective on what is really important, and when we search for ways to do good things, our actions can become part of our child's impact on the world. This book might inspire you on your journey to an "option B" that is potentially better than you envisioned before.

--Pat Brown, TCF Minneapolis Chapter,

Second Sunday of May

Many happy memories
Linger in our hearts this day
As we each remember our child
Who has left this earthly plane.
The day is bittersweet for us,
The mothers who have lost so much,
For to remove all pain could well
Erase the precious life we touched.
Tears will trace the memories of
Other, happier Mother's Days,
As we dwell in a quiet reverie
This Second Sunday of May
--Annette Mennen Baldwin, TCF Katy, TX
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen



The True Meaning of Mother's Day

Mother's Day comes once a year.
That surely is a shame.
For we should recognize her all year
and honor her with fame.
She's the one who stands so proud.
Sharing the love she gives.
Taking no credit for all that she does.
It's for her children she lives.
Now, we see persons all around us.
Moms who have lost their own.

But their Mom's love shines through;
Keeping them from being alone.
We also see Moms who have lost a child;
Oh what a pain it must be for those.
They are going to need a hug from you ...
Oh share one as your love flows.
Yes, this day is a special recognition for Moms.
Make sure to leave no one out.
For the love, honor and support she gives ...
Oh, that is what Mother's Day is all about.
-- Kaye Des'Ormeaux, Copyright 2003

Do They Know?

Do they know what its like to lose a son and have
to go on living?
For him to lose the future that he was supposed to
live
For me to lose mine.
Do they know?
Do they know what its like for every day to be a lost
dream?
To see others reach the pinnacles that should have
been his
His dreams left to die.
Do they know?
Do they know the sadness that I carry for what is
forever lost?
For the shared moments that make up a life
together
Never to exist now.
Do they know?
Do they know the physical pain of missing him
every single day?
To yearn for a hug, a spontaneous gift of love given
so easily
Never taken for granted again.
Do they know?
Do they know that I now live in a world forever
changed?
That I know a moment lost can never be regained
Never waste a moment.
Do they know?
I hope with every breath in me that they never have
to find out for themselves.
That they get to watch their children grow up and
grow old
To see the dreams yet to be lived.
I hope they never know...
--Sue McCubbin, from Work Related Grief Support
Newsletter July 2010.



Our Children Remembered



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

Josus Isaac Alvarez
Born: 3/04 Died: 6/07
Mother: Elizabeth Eenteno

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

Cheianne Jayda Berry
Born: 12/01 Died: 7/16
Mother: Kristina Berry

Sam Boldissar
Born: 10/91 Died: 3/17
Parents: Jeeri & Frank Boldissar

Alex James Bonstein
Born: 11/91 Died: 7/16
Mother: Cynthia Sanchez

Tamara Lynette Boyd
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/00
Parents: Gloria & Gayle Jones

William Joseph Britton III
Born: 3/62 Died: 7/85
Mother: Jean Anne Britton

Larry Broks Jr.
Born: 7/88 Died: 9/17
Mother: Thessia Carpenter

Scott Vincent Buehler
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/08
Mother: Elizabeth Buehler Miller

Julian Burns
Born: 12/18 Died: 1/19
Parents: Daniel & Marta Burns

Frank Christopher Castania
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania, Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

Vanessa Roseann Castania
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie Castania, Grandparents: Richard & Ann Leach

Carina Chandiramani
Born: 5/86 Died: 9/18
Mother: Norma Chandiramani

Blair Chapin
Born: 4/82 Died: 5/18
Sister: Elizabeth Chapin

Michael Edward Clapp
Born: 2/93 Died: 4/18
Mother: Patti Clapp

John Francis Cleary
Born: 12/74 Died: 8/93
Mother: Pauline Cleary Basil

Matthew Hales Clifford
Born: 1/80 Died: 3/15
Parents: Bob & Melissa Clifford

Aaron Christopher Cochran
Born: 11/90 Died: 9/12
Mother: Julia Carr

Tiffany Lamb Corkins
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/05
Mother: Nancy Lamb

Hannah Elizabeth Cortez
Born: 9/92 Died: 7/13
Parents: Rafael & Shari Cortez

Mike Sebastian Cortez
Born: 5/97 Died: 6/17
Mother: Rita Cortez

Scott Curry
Born: 8/59 Died: 7/08
Mother: Marilyn Nemeth

Michael N. Daffin
Born: 2/85 Died: 4/17
Parents: Michael & Diana Daffin

Daniel Elijah Day
Born: 4/93 Died: 5/16
Mother: Kristen Day

Michael David Deboe
Born: 12/75 Died: 5/09
Parents: Dave & Judy Deboe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jason Christopher Jenkins
Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20
Parents: Alvin & Caprice Jenkins

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quintana Dantas De Oliveria

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

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

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

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

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

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

Richard Paul Negrete
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04
Mother: Sally Negrete

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

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

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

Stephanie Sue Newkirk
Born: 12/67 Died: 10/15
Mother: Cindy McCoy

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

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

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

Trevor Mitchell Nicholson
Born: 7/99 Died: 1/18
Parents: Brad & Kendra Nicholson

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

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

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

Steven Scott Nussbaum
Born: 5/61 Died: 11/15
Parents: Will & Gloria Nussbaum

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

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

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

Sally Anne O'Connor
Born: 12/62 Died: 2/11
Mother: Grace "Darline" Dye

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

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

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

Isabella Ofsanko
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15
Mother: Desiree Palmer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Children Remembered

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 to: Lorian Tamara Elbert May 1966 - October 2007



When my only daughter died by suicide, I cried and cried and cried and cried. Then her pet doggy, Lucky-Bling-Bling died too! I felt dead also (for years - till today).

My only daughter who I waited for, after 9 years of praying to have a child, was born at last, Lorain Tamara Elbert on May 13, 1966!

I decided finally, now, that my dedication to my only daughter, Lorian who was so very, very multi-talented, so brilliant, a literal "genius", who on her own- the only one in our family to get a master's degree, went to USC and UCLA. She was a professional artist, writer (published a book), poet, musician, documentation, comedian, photographer, traveled, in movies, had friends, in galleries and who taught me "How to Love", "How to Live" again and again..."How to Live Without Crying" again and again!

Dorota



For Siblings...

Helping Yourself Heal When an Adult Sibling Dies

Your brother or sister has died. I am truly sorry for your loss. Whether your sibling was younger or older, whether the death was sudden or anticipated, whether you were very close to your sibling throughout your lives or experienced periods of separation, you are now grieving.

To grieve is to experience thoughts and feelings of loss inside you. If you loved your sibling, you will grieve. To mourn is to express your grief outside of yourself. Over time and with the support of others, to mourn is to heal.

Consider your unique relationship. Brothers and sisters often have strong and ambivalent feelings for one another. Sibling relationships tend to be complex, characterized by a mixture of anger, jealousy, and a fierce closeness and love. What was your relationship with the sibling who died? I'll bet it wasn't entirely simple.

Sibling relationships are so complex because while we are growing up, siblings are both friends and enemies, teammates and competitors. We play with our siblings, and we fight with them. We share our parents' love, and we compete for our parents' love. We enjoy being part of a family, and we struggle to become individuals. Sometimes we carry our childhood rivalries and differences into adulthood, and our ambivalent feelings toward our brothers and sisters remain. Sometimes we separate from our siblings completely as adults. And sometimes we become very close friends with our grown-up brothers and sisters.

Yet no matter what your present-day relationship with your sibling was, his or her death is a blow. You shared a long history with your sibling. Your stories began together and were intimately intertwined for years. Know that sibling grief is important. The loss of an adult sibling is often a significant one.

I have had the privilege of companionship many sibling mourners, and they have taught me that they often feel deep pain and a profound sense of loss. Yet our culture tends to under-appreciate sibling grief. When an adult dies, the myth goes, it is the parents,

spouse, and children of the person who died who suffer the greatest loss. We seem to think that siblings are affected less. Yet the truth is, the more deeply you feel connected to someone, the more difficult his or her death will be for you. And siblings—even when they have not spent much time together as adults—often have profoundly strong attachments to one another.

Yes, your grief for your sibling is very real. And it may be very difficult for you. Allow yourself the time and the support you need to mourn. Accept different grief responses. There is no one right way for you to mourn. Neither is there one right way for other family members to mourn. Each of you will mourn differently. If you have surviving siblings, you will find that each will mourn this death in his or her own way. While you might have anticipated some of your sibling's responses (for example, your emotional sister has probably been emotional), other responses may have surprised you. Try not to let these differences alarm you or hurt your feelings. If your parents are still alive, they, too, will have their own unique responses to the death. You can help by facilitating open and honest communication with them about their grief and yours. Feelings will naturally run high in your family in the weeks and months after the death. The best approach is to be open with one another without blaming.

Embrace the healing power of linking objects. Linking objects are items that belonged to or remind you of the sibling who died. Photographs, videos, CDs, ticket stubs, clothing, gifts you received from him or her—all of these connect you to the sibling who died. Some items may bring sadness, some happiness, some sappiness (i.e., when you are happy and sad at the same time). While linking objects may evoke painful feelings, they are healing feelings. They help you embrace the pain of your loss and move toward reconciliation. They may also give you comfort in the weeks and months ahead.

Whatever you do, DO NOT get rid of linking objects that remind you of the sibling who died. If you need to box some of them up for a time, do so. Later, when you are ready, you will likely find that displaying linking objects in your home is a way to remember the sibling who died and honor your ongoing feelings of love and loss. Honor the sibling who died. Sometimes grieving families ask that memorial contributions be made to specified charities in the name of the person who died. Consider your sibling's loves and passions. If he were still here, what would make him proud to have his name associated with?

Some families have set up scholarship funds. Some have donated books to the library or schools. Some have donated park benches or picnic tables, inscribed with an appropriate plaque. Some have planted gardens. You might also choose to carry on with something your sibling loved to do or left unfinished.

You will find that honoring your sibling is both a way to express your grief and to remember what was

special about him or her.

If you are a twin, seek extra support. If you are a twin whose twin brother or sister has died, you may be especially devastated by this death. Twins often report a sense of being halved after their twin has died. Without their twin, they simply do not feel whole.

Your grief work may be particularly arduous. Know this: mourners don't recover from grief. Instead, we become "reconciled" to it. In other words, we learn to live with it and are forever changed by it. This does not mean a life of misery, however. Mourners often not only heal but grow through grief. Our lives can potentially be deeper and more meaningful after the death of someone loved. Yet we only achieve reconciliation if we actively express and receive support for our grief. Find someone who will listen without judging as you talk about your grief.

Cry. Journal. Make art. Find things to do that help you express your grief, and keep doing them. I believe every human being wants to "mourn well" the deaths of those they love. It is as essential as breathing. Yet because our culture misunderstands the importance of grief, some people deny or avoid their normal and necessary thoughts and feelings. Choose to mourn. Choose to heal. Choose to live and love fully again.

A final word. To be "bereaved" literally means "to be torn apart" and "to have special needs." When a sibling dies, it is like a deep hole implodes inside of you. It's as if the hole penetrates you and leaves you gasping for air. I have always said that we mourn significant losses from the inside out. In my experience, it is only when we are nurtured (inside and outside) that we discover the courage to mourn openly and honestly.

Remember—you are not alone, and you are not forgotten. No, your love does not end with the death of your brother or sister. You can and will carry your sibling with you into the future, always remembering your past and what he or she brought to the dance of your life.

--by Center for Loss | Dec 15, 2016 | Articles by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.



For Grandparents...

From A Grandmother's Viewpoint

Death was not something I thought about when my grandchildren were born. Thirteen months after our fifth grandchild came into this world, I was standing in the snow holding my daughter's arm and looking down at a tiny white box containing him.

The grief came in waves, sometimes bearable... sometimes not. As well as dealing with the loss and watching my daughter, her husband, and two sons grieve, I felt helpless to ease their pain. When you lose a grandchild, you also lose the people your daughter and her family were. They no longer look at life the

same - they change. Grief does that - it changes the entire family and all those the family touches.

Unless one has lost a child or grandchild, you cannot even imagine what life is like in this grieving process. It has been six years since Kyle died. We are still healing, yet have come a long way. We are stronger and closer for having come thus far. WE WILL NEVER FORGET THIS CHILD!

-- Kyle's Grandmother, TCF/Central CT

From Our Members...

Shaggy Dog Story

An older, tired looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep. An hour later he woke up and went to the door. I let him out. The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for almost an hour.

This continued off and on for several weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: "I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap." The next day he arrived for his nap with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a house with 6 children, 2 under the age of 3 - He's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?"

- Author Unknown Submitted by Linda Curtis

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: May1st for June 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.



- Connie Licciardone (chapter co-leader)....(310) 292-5381
- Bonnie Mantyla (chapter co-leader).....(310) 530-8489
- Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096
- 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
- goodgriefresources.com
- bereavedparentsusa.org
- childloss.com
- griefwatch.dom
- opentohope.com

healingafterloss.org
 survivorsofselfharm.com
 taps.org (military death)
 save.org (suicide/depression)
 pomc.com (families of murder victims)
 grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)
 www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)
 Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

webhealing.com
 alivealone.org
 angelmoms.com

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: Leo & Connie Licciardone and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya
 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Kristy Konopasek
 WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik	Lori Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
Connie & Leo Licciardone	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 45th TCF National Conference..

After two years of not being able to meet in person, we are really looking forward to being together! Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Houston, Texas, during the weekend of August 5-7, 2022. To register or get more information go to <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/45th-tcf-national-conference/>

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

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 _____

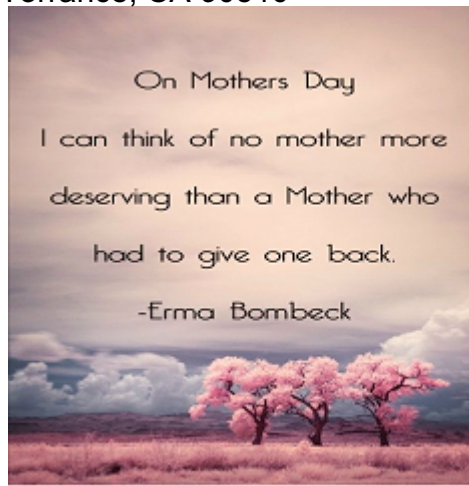
Tribute _____

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.

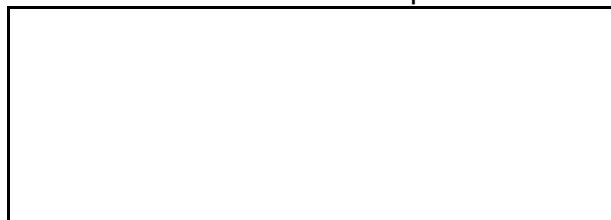


The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 3223
Torrance CA 90503



-- Return Service Requested--



May 2022

Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

©2022 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.