



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

June 2022 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be June 2nd, 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***, June 2nd meeting will start with "Summer Time and Grief".

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, June 2nd** meeting will start with "Summer Time and Grief". As the weather warms and school comes to a close we mentally prepare for summer. Some families look forward to Father's Day, graduations, summer vacations and activities, reunions, weddings or just a slower pace of life. If you are newly bereaved you may be stuck between the feelings of not being able to look forward to the upcoming major events, yet, knowing you have to participate in some capacity. Caught, between the joy of the current moment and the immense sadness about what might have been can make you feel overburdened in your grief. By creating a plan and including your departed child in it, you may find it easier to deal with. Please join us as we explore how we handle old memories, and acquire new ones as we face the summer time while we are mourning the loss of a loved one.

It's June

It might have been her wedding. It was supposed to be his graduation day; his friends are there - he is not. You had always planned to take them to Disneyland, but it is too late for that, now.

When they died, they took some of your future as well; they took your dreams for them. They left a hole in your life and you will never feel completely whole again.

Should you accept those invitations to weddings and graduations? Only you know what is comfortable for you...

Give yourself all the room you need, no matter what anyone else says. Perhaps this year, you will want to send a card or gift instead of attending the event.

A couple in our Chapter went to their son's friend's wedding reception and skipped the wedding ceremony, which would have been too painful for them.

One mom said she left a graduation with mixed emotions. She ached for her son's place in line, getting his diploma; but she also felt honored to have been invited by her son's friend and proud when they brought her flowers "for Jim," and she loved hearing all the stories about her son that they shared.

What you have left is the love you feel for them, the memories that they left you-- these will always be a part of you. In this way, they are a part of your future.

This is a very sad and difficult time for you, so do

something nice for yourself today. Isn't that what your child would have wanted?

--L.E. Skagit Chapter, Mount Vernon, WA

What About Vacations?

When your heart is hurting after the loss of a loved one, you wonder if you will ever be able to "take a vacation" from grief. There are many answers to this question. The secret is to find the right one for you.

Vacations for my family were spent mostly at home. Our work schedules rarely permitted us to go away and with three children we found traveling to be expensive. I have always lived on Long Island, NY, and my parents brainwashed us to think that living on Long Island was a permanent vacation. Do you think that worked for the tourist board?

After my 19-year-old daughter, Peggy, and my 21-year-old son Denis, died in the same automobile accident, I never planned a vacation to "get away" from my surroundings. My home was my "nest" and the source of great comfort to me. Not everyone feels this way.

Staying with the familiar made me feel comfortable. Having my support circle nearby was important to me. Enjoying the pleasures that I had shared with Peggy and Denis kept them close to my heart. Even though tears could accompany these pleasures, the tears were healing. Whether it was simply walking along the beach or sitting by the pool where we had spent so many hours with the swim team, or watching a soccer game which took so much of our time with three teams in the family, or noticing their favorite colors, flowers, TV programs, or foods. These things helped reinforce their presence forever in my mind, never to be erased.

Some families agonize whether to go away for a vacation after losing a loved one and some families can't get away fast enough! So you see how different we all are. It's tough for husbands and wives who disagree about vacation plans to find a reasonable "compromise" to give relief to their individual styles of grieving.

The rule of thumb is: Do what helps you. If taking a cruise, or flying to a distant sunny haven, or visiting mountains or a seaside retreat, or just relaxing at a nearby resort helps you gain a moment of peace, do it. But one thing I must



caution you about; don't go alone. There is time to reflect or quietly meditate wherever you are, but when you are hurting so terribly, it is not wise to be alone for long periods of time. However, it is good to have someone to share your thoughts with, releasing some of those feelings that are haunting you. Having a good listener with you is wonderful medicine for you. It's also good to have someone to hug. Therefore, make sure you vacation with the right person!

Many grieving families that have met have found solace in a trip "away" from their home base. Sometimes, just the change is what they need. Other times, it's leaving work or that "empty chair" behind. A little sunshine can warm our souls, so the warmer climates appeal to us and seem to bring an inner cheer. I know I am a "sunshine" person and can accomplish ten times as much on a sunny day, so I'm sure a sunny vacation would be productive for me.

In my early days of bereavement, I found that taking a little photo album like a "grandma's brag book" with me, filled with my favorite pictures of Peggy and Denis, made it feel as if they were with me. Packing that album in every pocketbook I used, whether the large everyday variety or the tiny evening bag, it was like a pacifier for me. When a friend of mine told me that she dreaded going on vacation "without her daughter along", I suggested that she take a little picture album, crammed full of her daughter's snapshots with her on the trip and she did. When she returned, she called me and happily announced that it had made a difference to her, releasing some of that emptiness she felt. So take a chance and try something different to help your heart. You might surprise yourself!

Other bereaved friends could not bear to stay home for any major holidays and off they flew to far-away vacation spots. That worked for them, getting away from the hoopla of the holidays and the family gatherings that they did not feel strong enough yet to attend. Some of these bereaved families said they found a respite from their grief while "on vacation", but that coming home was the hardest, causing feelings of depression when they returned. So, we all have to find the balance that fits our lives. It doesn't happen overnight. It's something that requires "trial and error" by us to find the blend that lifts our spirits.

Vacations can be a time of renewal for us. We all know that we need a vacation "from grief." We just have to figure out what kind of vacation our

own heart needs. Good luck!

—Elaine Stillwell

Dear Fathers,

Never think we don't notice you - standing alone in a crowd, talking about football, politics, your latest electricity bill or perhaps your next home maintenance job or your car. Everyday things. You make an effort to join in and laugh when you think it appropriate. Your shoulders slouch a little, you need a haircut, you've been skipping the gym and Father's Day is coming. It's these special days that get to you and again you count the ways you miss your daughter or your son.



You dwell on the ways you once celebrated Father's Day and indeed the way you yourself were celebrated as a dad, and it hurts. You know this heaviness of spirit will not lighten. Maybe someone will unwittingly say it will, and you grit your teeth and try to ignore the comment as you feel your emotions fraying. You don't speak as you know your voice will waver and when that happens you hold yourself steady to keep your coping mechanism intact. Am I correct?

Friends, work mates and extended family say with sincerity, 'If you ever need anything ...' but it's too hard to ask for help, or 'How are you?' and you reply, 'Not bad, not bad at all'. That's often about all you feel safe to say. What you need is other grieving dads to talk things over with. These are men who know what is truly going on in your head. It's a mateship thing. They have cleared a certain hurdle and are laying a path for you to follow. They will patiently wait for you to catch up.

You are so blessed to have had your child in your life. He or she was a great accomplishment to be prized proudly on Father's Day.

--Judy Dowling Remembering Patrick

Forever Prepared ... Forever Unready —A Mother's Grief

We who have lost our child
Are often caught off guard unexpectedly
Mostly in an expected situation
We try to honor those we love
By attending their celebrations
To represent our lost child as well
It's those times we know will be tough

We prepare ourselves
 We plan what if's
 We have an escape plan at the ready
 We put on our bravest face
 Try to truly embrace the goodness of the day
 Yet in just a moment A word ... A look ...
 Our brave face can just fall
 Then right there for everyone to see
 Is the sadness so deeply felt
 This is the truest core of me
 The part that accompanies
 every second of my life
 The part I cannot hide away
 No matter how much I try
 It just comes out to look about
 Usually at the most crucial times
 The ones we're trying to share with loved ones
 But I can't help it ... I'm here without my child
 So even if you think you've covered all your bases
 Prepared yourself to do your best
 Try your hardest not to stress
 Just pack some extra tissues
 Compose your self again .
 Those who truly love you
 Or call themselves your friend
 Will accept that this is hard for you
 Regardless of how much time has passed
 Most of them can't imagine
 The pain associated with losing a child
 Only having memories from the past.
 --Rachael, Campbelltown Chapter
 NSW Chapter TCF Newsletter



and so much more.

The TCF 45th National Conference is a much-needed gift that we give to ourselves! This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. TCF's discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday.

Light Rekindled

Our family had experienced grief in several forms in the years prior to our daughter Anna's death. However, at this particular time in our life, everything was moving along smoothly. Life was full of hopes and dreams for the future. Then the unthinkable happened. Anna's "sinus headaches" became so severe that she became incapacitated. Over the next few weeks the doctors struggled to establish the right diagnosis, finally providing us confirmation of the worst of their considerations. Anna had several horrible, malignant brain tumors. In forty-nine days from the diagnosis our "light went out" as our precious child breathed her last breath.

Like others who have experienced the death of a child, our lives were turned upside down without our permission. It all happened so quickly that we were spinning out of control, functioning on auto-pilot, relying on friends to perform many daily tasks. As we now look back, we realize that the numbness that we felt during those first days and weeks following her death was truly a gift. Surely no one could survive this overwhelming, gut-wrenching pain if the reality of it hit all at once. The reality comes soon enough as the intensity of grief seeps into our entire being. As life goes on for everyone around us, we are left to deal with our shattered world and wade into the mucky waters of grief.

Fortunately my husband and I became aware of The Compassionate Friends. We attended national conferences and soaked up all the information, support and hugs that were offered. We soon were committed to starting a chapter in our area, but the exhaustion of grieving prevented us from moving forward with this plan for four years.

Editor's note: Perhaps you should consider making TCF's National conference a new summer tradition. Many feel they come away with a new sense of peace and a better sense of their own grief after attending....

TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE , 2022 is in Houston, TX AUGUST 5 - AUGUST 7

We are very pleased to welcome back TCF's annual national conference, this year in person!

This eagerly anticipated event for those bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings who attend seeking renewed hope, ways of coping with their grief, and friendships made with those who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. With inspirational keynote speakers, numerous workshops including a wide variety of topics, and the always memorable candle lighting program on Saturday evening, culminating with the popular Walk to Remember on Sunday morning,

Today, through the support of family, loyal friends in our church who allowed us to lean on their faith and hope when ours was weak, and with the new friends we have made through The Compassionate Friends, we have found our way to “the other side of grief.” It has not been an easy road, but it was one that we had to travel in order to discover wholeness and find the “new normal” that defines the rest of our lives.

Yes, this was the ninth conference we have attended. People ask “why?” “Why do you continue to be part of The Compassionate Friends?” The answer is easy. The people are fabulous. No one cares what kind of house you live in or what kind of work you do. They care about YOU and the grief you bare.

They want to HEAR your story and KNOW YOUR CHILD and SEE his/her picture on the picture board. Their compassion is genuine. They ask how you are because they really want to know. The world tells us to “be over it.” The Compassionate Friends, whether it is a local meeting or national conference, affirms and validates YOUR unique grief. TCF is a safe place where you can say anything, cry or not cry, laugh or not laugh, do whatever you want (without causing harm to self or others) without explanation. In addition, the workshops are excellent. The speakers are phenomenal. As hospital and hospice chaplains we have benefitted in recent years from the professional day workshops, where we have learned new ways to bring hope to those who have experienced the death of a child of any age.

Ten years after Anna’s death, we continue to attend the National Conference. A high percentage of those who attend are quite newly bereaved, two years or less. On the final evening as we are gathered together in the banquet hall, I look around the room at the hundreds of people in attendance. There is an overwhelming amount of pain in that huge room. Yet, as one by one the candles are lit during the service of remembrance, there is also an enormous amount of hope. Within this family of The Compassionate Friends, bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents find assurance that their child will remain in their hearts forever and that one day life can be good again.

All of my Compassionate Friends are high on my list of those to whom I express my deepest thanks for helping to rekindle the light that went out for me the day my daughter died. It is the vision of

The Compassionate Friends that “everyone who needs us will find us, and everyone who finds us will be helped.” Won’t you please give us a try—no matter the age of your child or cause of death or how long it has been, we want you to know that “you need not walk alone” on this life-long journey, and that your child is forever loved and remembered.

--Paula Funk TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI In loving memory of my daughter, Anna

Faded Memories

I remember the first time I realized that my sense of my son, Jeremy, was beginning to fade. I was losing his smell, the exact color of his hair, the tone of his voice when he said, “Oh, Mom,” the feel of his arms around me when I got a too-seldom sixteen year-old hug.

Until my son’s death, it had never occurred to me that I knew him through all of my senses. I believe the profound sense of loss I’ve experienced results in part from this total cut-off from his being. It’s not just that I can’t physically see him, but the essence of who he was is gone.

Perhaps that explains why I would often go to his room when I wanted to recapture a connection with him. Some nights I would sleep in his bed. I would wear his tee shirts. I would make a cocoon of an afghan that wrapped around him many times. Somehow, I felt his energy about me. I smelled his smell.

At other times, I’d get out the Ziploc bag; the one with snippets of his hair that was cut when they had to screw the “halo” in his head to secure his neck and severed spinal cord. I’d study the color of his hair, memorizing the shades of light brown. And the sounds? Only one. I found a cassette tape that he had recorded himself accompanying a favorite band. I listened to that for hours, eyes closed, trying to capture the vision of those moments.

Although my behaviors might seem odd to some, the fear of fading memories eased. Tom Robbins, in his book *Jitterbug Perfume*, says “Death is impatient and thoughtless. It barges into your room when you are right in the middle of something. It doesn't even bother to wipe its boots.” True. I was in the middle of parenting my only child. Death not only left the dirty mess of



grieving for me to clean-up, but I had no warning. Had I had warning that a three-quarter ton pick-up truck was going to run head-on into my son's Toyota Celica, I would have long before bought a cam-corder and taken hours of audio and video. Lights. Camera. Action. The opening scene is me yelling, "Can you quiet down a little? You're sounding great, but those drums are going to drive the neighbors crazy." No answer. Next scene: In his room, head-set on, eyes closed, tongue showing, intensity high, drumsticks alive with action. Next scene: At the soccer field, I'm feeling the pride of watching my half-back move the ball down the field, demonstrating his years of experience. Next scene: Middle of the night. I wake up to go to the bathroom; pass by his room. I see the light from the computer screen. "Jeremy, you've got to go to school in the morning. Turn that thing off." Fade out. Regrets. I didn't have a camcorder.

Often, just when I'm struggling with trying to remember the details, the minute details, I'll have one of those experiences. It's something that I'm hesitant to tell anyone about, partly because it feels so private and partly because I fear I won't be understood.

I'll be sleeping, and he'll come to me. Instantaneously my senses take in his presence; all of who he is. I feel the weight of his body against me as we hug. I see his eyebrows that almost, but not quite, meet. I smell that smell that is his alone. I hear his voice, oh so familiar. I find myself surprised that he is so real.

I used to awaken disappointed that it was "only" a dream. Today, nine years after his death, I treasure these infrequent experiences. While I don't understand it, and I have no explanations, each time it happens I believe I have spent a brief time in the presence of my son.

I thank God I don't have to rely only on faded memories.

--Judi Simmons Estes Prairie Village, Kansas
In Memory of my son Jeremy

2015

Today my Danny would have turned twenty-eight.
Instead he is gone
Took control of his fate
And I am left here,
Alone, full of hate,



Resentment, anger, rage, guilt, and grief
Because his life here on earth was far too brief
Just a heartbeat, a blink of an eye, just a second
I am left here to ponder,
To wonder To reckon
To try and understand why he chose to leave this place
And cause me a pain that no emotion can replace.
Will this sadness and agony ever come to a close?
Or will I always feel numb from my head to my toes?
Knowing this was the path that he chose
Never considering what he would leave behind
That he would never know the pain so unkind
That my heart has been stolen
Taken away for evermore
I am his mom and could help him no more
What I would give for just one moment more
Even just a dream of him would help even the score
The imbalance, the permanence that his death has caused
To never touch or hug him again
But I pause
Frequently throughout the day
Hoping for a sign of my Danny to stay
In my heart, mind, and soul never to forget his smile and hugs
And the pull of my heartstrings he tugs and he tugs
My beautiful son Daniel Malcolm my love
Please forgive me for failing you
Please stay up above
So that when I look up and see the full moon
Knowing one day we will be together
Never too soon
Love mommy
--Ellen Hansen, TCF Honolulu

The Silent Anguish of Wistful Moms

I'm guessing you don't know how many of us are out here. Before I became one myself, I had no idea. We are the "Wistful Moms" for countless reasons; our dreams and our realities never crossed paths. We hoped, wished, and prayed for that "perfect" little bundle of joy, but those silent but wholehearted requests went unanswered. Some of us have come to terms with it, while still others struggle ... but we all wonder.

When you tell us you are expecting, we will congratulate you, hug you, ask how you are doing, and exclaim over and over about how wonderful it

is and how excited we are for you. We will be there for you when morning sickness hits, we will tell you how much motherhood agrees with you when you most need a lift, we will listen with rapt attention to your favorite names and nursery themes. Heck, we will probably even throw you the best baby shower you can possibly imagine ... but through it all, we will wonder.

We will wonder what it must be like to hear that we are, indeed, pregnant. We will wonder if you immediately feel an attachment to that tiny little cluster of cells that will eventually be a baby or if the bond takes some time. We will wonder what it would be like to know we are carrying life along with us wherever we go. We wonder if we should just give those fertility treatments one more try ...

When the pregnancy has been moving along without a hitch, and you are well into your third trimester, we will listen to you complain about swollen ankles, how difficult it is to sleep, and how you just wish that the little one would come a little early to put an end to your misery. We will listen and offer what sympathy we can ... but through it all, we will wonder.



We wonder what it really feels like to carry a child for so long. We wonder how comforting it is to know that if labor were to begin at any moment, your child would be strong and healthy. We wonder what secret you know that we weren't aware of for staying pregnant until your child was ready and able to survive in the outside world ...

When the kids are driving you crazy with childish bickering, and wearing you out with their endless stream of activities, we will listen and offer to help in any way we can. When another lamp is broken after an indoor wrestling match, and the youngest decided to help you decorate with crayoned artwork in the family room, we will tell you it will be okay and will help put things back in order. And when the endless thump-thump of a basketball in the second floor bedroom and another pair of muddy, grass-stained pants with holes in the knees make you want to tear your hair out, we will lightheartedly remind you that "kids will be kids" ... but through it all, we will wonder.

We wonder how amazing it feels to hear your child call you Mommy. We wonder what a house full of mobile, high-spirited, active children sounds like. We will wonder if there is something wrong with us for being envious of minor childhood bumps and scrapes, not because we wish injury on a child,

but because it means that child is running, jumping, and playing as all kids should. We will wonder what could have been, had we never been given that heartbreaking diagnosis ...

When you complain that your children are outgrowing clothes every other week, we will go shopping with you and surround ourselves with all of those "big kid" outfits we will never buy. When the first date rolls around and you are not so sure you are ready for this chapter to begin, we will tell you to take a deep breath and remind you that you have taught your children well, and they will carry your influence wherever they may go. When it's time to plan a wedding and you fret over the outrageous cost, we will tell you it will all work out and we will help find ways to make that dream-come-true day possible ... but through it all, we will wonder.

We will wonder what our angels would have looked like today, instead of remembering them forever frozen in that single most devastating moment we ever faced, however long ago it happened. We wonder where they would have gone on those first dates, where they would have gone to college, what career path they would have chosen, how many grandchildren we will never have the chance to spoil. We wonder what we mourn most ... our precious children, or all that will never be for them.

Whether it be through infertility, miscarriage, premature birth, a disabling diagnosis, or the death of a child far too early in life, we all wonder. We are all human, and even when we witness these moments of frustration, fear, anger and annoyance, we don't fault you. You are undertaking the most important and most difficult task known to woman; you are raising a child. But, we wonder if you see them for the amazing little miracles they are. We wonder if you ever stop to think about how many billion possible genetic mutations there are and how, with just a micro measurement's difference here or there, you could have very easily been in our shoes. We wonder if you ever stop to recognize how truly and incredibly fortunate you are ... because you have that perfect, healthy child we all so covet. We know it isn't always easy, but every now and then, we hope you see it and take that moment to cherish your precious child.

--Theresa Raker Albany, New York. Theresa is a wife and full-time mom with a six-year-old son with special needs; his identical twin passed away two years ago at the age of four. She also writes a blog about her experiences as a mother titled: "Hello from Holland."

Seasoned Greivers...

Father's Day Revisited



Now I can look back upon that first Father's Day, the first after the death of our son Jeff. I was a mess. A man without hope, with little or no reason to continue living, deep in my own depressive grief, I could not share any joy with others.

I look back wondering how I could have treated my wife and children as I did while they were trying to celebrate in my honor. Inside, I was crying out, "What are these useless gifts? Don't you know the only gift I want is to have my son.

But it was through the love, caring, understanding, nurturing of those loved ones which has brought me so far from that first Father's Day. Now I can enjoy the joy of others, I can laugh once again, and once again, there is a life worth living.

For all those fathers for whom this is the first Father's Day, have the best day that you can.

-- TCF Louisville, KY

Newly Bereaved...

The Truth



What does one do with "the truth?" When I am asked, "How are you? How are you really?" my **true** answer would be "I wish I were dead." Such a response, however true it may be, is a conversation stopper of epic proportions. If the conversation doesn't end immediately, then I have to be prepared for a barrage of "You don't mean that! You can't mean that! What about your husband and daughter? Jordan would not want for you to feel that way!" And so on. While I know people probably mean well, it is not helpful to require me to lie.

When Jordan was in his mid-teens, we made it compulsory for him to attend confirmation classes at our church. When the classes were concluded, he advised us that he was not ready to be confirmed. My husband, a "cradle Episcopalian," was horrified and planned to demand that Jordan go through with confirmation. One of the youth ministers took Jeff aside and advised, "You do realize you're requiring him to stand up in front of the whole church and lie?" So, we stayed home that day. We didn't require him to lie; we were sad, we were disappointed. We missed out on a rite of

passage that had mattered to us. But how could you require someone you love to lie?

Is this something we're promoting as a culture? We're lied to regularly by elected officials, by business leaders, by institutions of higher education... usually with money and power as the motivation. So, is that why our culture is okay with expecting bereaved parents to lie about how we feel? We're certainly not motivated by money or power.

But how do I answer the "How are you?" question? I answer, "I'm okay." At least the conversation doesn't stop. At least I'm not further isolated.

--Peggi Johnson TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

For Friends And Family...

As a friend to a grieving parent, you can never take away that pain. But there are things you can do to help support bereaved parents—especially if they're not looking forward to Father's Day. Experts suggest that you:

Meet them where they are in their grief.

Psychotherapist and grief specialist Fran Dorf cautions friends not to say or do things that could make a parent's grief seem like it's out of proportion or taking too long to resolve. Listen to your friend without judgment or advice. There is no right way to grieve. We need to let others work through their pain instead of trying to force them through it.

Let your friend know you're thinking of them. You could say something like, "You're on my mind today. I miss Michael, too." If they have a living child, try, "This day must be filled with mixed feelings for you. I love seeing the relationship you have with Cora and remember your love for Jessie." If you don't know what to say, that's okay. Just acknowledging that it can be a hard day can help your friend feel supported.

Say their child's name. Often when someone dies, people stop saying their name around the grieving family. Experts agree that many families want to hear the child's name out loud. Grief-support expert Shelly Gillan of Kara says that "it reminds them that their child is still loved and missed by many. A parent's worst fear is that their child will be forgotten."

Share memories or do something to honor the child—if your friend is ready Darcy Krause advises that while some grieving parents won't want to talk about their child, "others will leap at the chance.

Follow social cues. If they change the topic, follow their lead.” Let your friend know that you’re available to talk or share stories about their child.

If you want to give a thoughtful gift, write a card that they can read when they’re ready. Take a photo of something that reminds you of the child’s favorite color, movie, or holiday and send a text that lets your friend know you’re thinking of them.

Support surviving siblings. Darcy Krause reminds us that, even in families, grief can be lonely. Bereaved siblings can feel left out or experience survivor’s guilt that they’re still alive while their sibling isn’t. They sometimes feel pressure to take on the deceased sibling’s role in the family. Pay extra attention to siblings and help them feel nurtured and loved. Plan a special outing with them after Father’s Day: a trip to the aquarium, an afternoon of arcade games, anything that makes them feel cherished.

Encourage self-care. Take your friend for a walk or drop by with a healthy meal. Offer to spend Father’s Day together doing something relaxing like enjoying the outdoors or watching a ball game.

Stay in the picture. Father’s Day doesn’t necessarily become easier over time for a parent who lost a child. But friends and family can get caught up with their own lives and forget to check in as time passes. Commit to being there in the years to come on Father’s Day and to helping your friend keep their child’s memory alive.

--Special thanks to Shelly Gillan, MFT, Darcy Walker Krause, JD, LSW, Fran Dorf, LCSW, and Kory Floyd, PhD.

Helpful Hint...



June Birth Stone Pearl

Pearls are the only gemstones made by living creatures. Mollusks produce pearls by depositing layers of calcium carbonate around microscopic irritants that get lodged in their shells.

Is this what you are doing with your grief? Protecting yourself by adding layers of distance from others? Open your Clam (Grief) up so that others may Hold (Help) the beauty of the gem (Resolution) that is within you!

--The Greater Baltimore Chapter

Welcome...

“...a bear wedged in great tightness.” “In a tape called, ‘To Touch a Grieving Heart’ there is a wonderful little reminder of the Winnie the Pooh

story by A. A. Milne. You may recall that Winnie goes to visit Rabbit and eats too much honey. Coming out of Rabbit’s hole, he gets stuck tight – so tight he can’t even sigh. He asks his friends to stay with him, read him a story, and offer words of comfort...and thus to help ‘a bear wedged in great tightness.’ Notice that Pooh does not ask to be pulled out of the hole, he asks only for company so he is not alone. I think Grief is like being ‘a bear wedged in great tightness.’ And, while we cannot make the grief go away for each other, The Compassionate Friends starts and stops with the core idea that we will be there for each other; that ‘we need not walk alone.’ ”

--Opening remarks of the late Richard Edler’s keynote speech at the TCF National Conference

Book Review...



“My life was suddenly divided into BEFORE and AFTER and there was no going back to BEFORE. But then I realized I had a choice to live the AFTER. I had to decide.” -- from “A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance” by Brenda Neal Bereaved mother and author of Broken Hearts, Living Hope: - free support for bereaved families: www.brokenheartslivinghope.com

Having a Good Day

How pleasant it was, this sunny day,
To laugh at happy moments that came our way.
The sky was blue and a gentle breeze
made a sighing sound through the trees.
It’s times like this we are in disbelief
That we aren’t doubled over in our grief.
It means we’ve moved forward since then,
and soon we’ll be with our little girl again.
--Dan Gardner, TCF Nashville, TN

Reality

“The reality is that you will grieve forever.
You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one;
you’ll learn to live with it.
You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around
the loss you have suffered.
You will be whole again but you will never be the
same.
Nor should you be the same
nor would you want to.”
-- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross





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 Alvarez

Scott Berkovitz
Born: 5/88 Died: 1/16
Parents: Carl Berkovitz &
Maria Moore

Noah Bernstein
Born: 6/87 Died: 2/17
Mother: Beth Bernstein

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bryce Patrick Fisher
Born: 10/86 Died: 8/21
Mother: Nancy Goodson

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesse Hernandez
Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22
Mother: Joann 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Match
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley Match
Grandmother: Dorothy Match

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

Our Children Remembered

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Sorry, no birthday tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...



Dreamy Memories

Beckoning, dreamy memories
Call softly out to me,
Taking me back through the years
To the way it used to be.
Carefree and happy was our Brad,
The world was his shining toy,
Sunny days and summer nights
Two favorites of his joy.
He floated, drifting with the tide,
Never knowing care or sorrow,
Living each day as it came,
With no thoughts of tomorrow.
I shed a tear for him today,
My heart called out his name.
I longed to hold him in my arms
For a touch that never came.
I closed my eyes to see his face
And hoped to see his smile.
I waited to hear him say to me,
"I'll be back in just a while."
And then my eyes, so filled with fear,
My heart, so filled with pain,
Came back to see he wasn't here—
My wishes were in vain.
Wistfully my mind returns
To the present day again.
I find in pleasant sweet surprise,
His soul still lives within.
Though he may not be here now
In a body we can touch,
His memory will grow each day—
In our hearts that means so much.
So now I'll say the time will come
When we will be together again.
Until that day no good-byes we'll say,
Just "We love you. God bless."
~ Debbie Sadler Brown, TCF/ Nashville, TN

Ask Dr. Paulson

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her Q & A column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

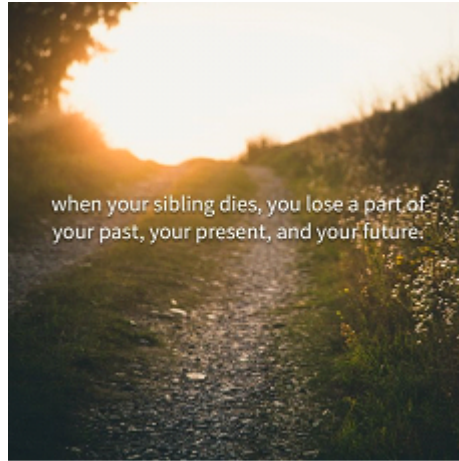
Q. My brother died in an accident before Thanksgiving and now I don't know what to do about my wedding which was planned for this summer. Even though I'm not thinking too clearly, I finally decided I want to go ahead with my wedding because I think my brother would approve. My parents have made it clear they think I should wait. They say it's too soon and would be too difficult on the family and my brother's fiancé, who is my best friend and was to be my Maid of Honor. Am I being selfish in wanting to go ahead with my wedding at this point? Should I ask my best friend if she still wants to be my Maid of Honor? Also, can you give me some ideas how I could include the memory of my brother during the ceremony?

A. Since you were engaged before your brother's death, it sounds like a good idea to continue with your wedding plans. Right now you need all of the support you can get, and confirming your decision to marry sounds like a good idea if your fiancé is supportive through your grief. However, birthdays, holidays, the anniversary of your brother's death, and major life events are usually difficult. They are family events that only seem to magnify the fact that a family member is missing. Also, weddings take a lot of planning, and your family may be unable to assist you with those plans. So it will be important that you have others who are willing to jump in and help. Your best friend may also initially be unable to help and participate, but a few months from now she may want to be involved—and it may be very healing to her. I would not put any pressure on her right now, though—you really don't need to decide who is to be your Maid of Honor until the last second. She may eventually want to assist you with your plans as a way of including your brother, or remembering your brother.

There are many ways I have heard that siblings have included their brothers or sisters in their weddings. These include: playing a special song; printing a poem or picture in the wedding programs; noting in the program their sibling—"On our special day we want to fondly remember our loved and cherished brother _____ who is unable to be with us today, but would have loved to celebrate in our joy with us"; noting that special

flowers or an arrangement is in their memory; or lighting a special candle. I think finding a special way to include him would be a terrific way to ease the pain of his absence and to pay tribute to the special bond you shared.

Just remember that mingled with the joy of your union will be the sorrow of his absence. But try to celebrate on this joyous occasion his life and his gifts to you and your family of memories, love, acceptance, and caring.



when your sibling dies, you lose a part of your past, your present, and your future.

When A Sibling Dies

The death of a child is a family crisis no less for the siblings than for the parents. Surviving siblings may feel abandoned because grieving parents no longer have the emotional energy to care for them. They may feel unloved as they experience family friends putting the deceased child on a pedestal. They may feel incredibly guilty, remembering every bout of sibling rivalry, every unkind word, and every slammed door. They may feel unworthy to be alive, longing for answers to explain why their brother or sister died and they didn't. And they may, therefore, seek conscious or unconscious ways to self-destruct: running away from home, using alcohol and other drugs, taking on characteristics of the dead siblings and thus diminishing their own image.

Following are suggestions children have shared about how parents can help them when a brother or sister has died:

1. Allow siblings to participate fully in funeral plans and memorial activities. Let them choose whether or not they want to see their sibling at the funeral home. Let them choose some of the music, write and/or read a memorial to their brother or sister, go with you or alone to cemetery visits.
2. Share with the siblings all factual information, as it becomes known. Being "left out" only enhances a growing sense of not being important to the family.
3. When you see children who remind you of your child, point them out to the siblings and explain the grief spasm it has caused. Mysterious behavior enhances the sibling's fear of being left out.
4. Ask the siblings to be with you occasionally as

you grieve. If you always grieve in private, the emotional distance between you will widen.

5. Talk with siblings both about pleasant memories and unpleasant memories of the dead child. This prevents pedestal placing.

6. Don't tell siblings to "be strong" for someone else. That is too great a burden to carry.

7. Understand that it may be easier for siblings to talk to friends, or another trusted adult, than to parents. They desperately do not want to add to their parents' devastation so may seek counsel and understanding elsewhere.

8. Remember that you can't change the past. But you can face the present and guide the future. Your family will forever be changed--it does not always have to remain devastated.

-- Janice Lord, TCF/Anne Arundel County, MD

For Grandparents...



Grandparents Grief: How to Support Someone Who is Coping with the Loss of a Grandchild

Consider the following tips when supporting a grandparent who has lost a grandchild:

1. Avoid cliché's: Words, particularly clichés, can be extremely painful for a grieving grandparent because they diminish the very real and very painful loss of a unique child.
2. Be aware of holidays and other significant days: Visit the grandparent, write a note or simply give them a quick phone call during these times. Your ongoing support will be appreciated and healing.
3. Be compassionate: Give the grandparent permission to express their feelings without fear of criticism. Don't instruct, or set expectations about how they should respond. Never say, "I know how you feel." You don't.
4. Listen with your heart: Listen attentively and try to understand. Don't worry so much about what you will say, rather concentrate on the words that are being shared with you.
5. Offer practical help: Preparing food and washing clothes are just a few of the practical ways of showing you care. Whether you are coping with the loss of a grandchild or supporting someone who is, always be kind and don't assume unrealistic expectations. There is no time line for how long grief should last. Take a one-day-at-a-time approach. After all, "grief is not

an enemy to be vanquished, but a necessity to be experienced as a result of having loved."

--Alan Wolfelt

From Our Members...



"There is nothing that can replace the absence of someone dear to us, and one should not even attempt to do so. One must simply hold out and endure it. At first that sounds very hard, but at the same time it is also a great comfort. For to the extent the emptiness truly remains unfilled one remains connected to the other person through it. It is wrong to say that God fills the emptiness. God in no way fills it but much more leaves it precisely unfilled and thus helps us preserve -- even in pain -- the authentic relationship. Furthermore, the more beautiful and full the remembrances, the more difficult the separation. But gratitude transforms the torment of memory into silent joy. One bears what was lovely in the past not as a thorn but as a precious gift deep within, a hidden treasure of which one can always be certain.

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer Lifted with thanks from Childless Parents Spring Newsletter
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: June 1st for July 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

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)

grasphep.org (substance abuse deaths)

www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)

Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER 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 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--

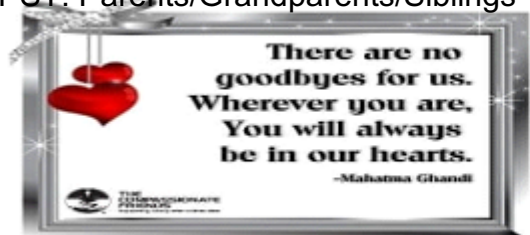
7 AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings (open depending on moderator availability)
5 PM PST: Loss to Substance Related Causes
5 PM PST: Pregnancy/Infant Loss
6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

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

In loving memory of Michael B. Ruggera, Jr, April 1951 - April 1996.

Love, Dad

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

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

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____



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

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

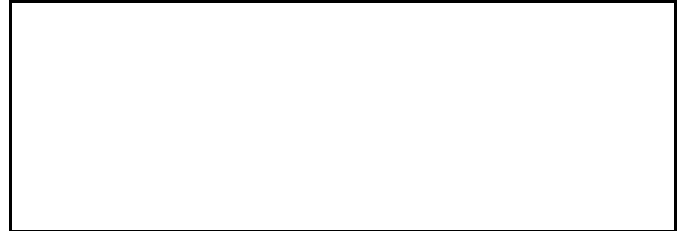
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For the grieving Fathers of our wonderful TCF Family, I wish to extend love, light, and the hope for renewed happiness, this Father's Day. Let us never forget the child that is no longer with us.



-- Return Service Requested--



June 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.

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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or have a new address, please contact us.