



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

July 2022 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be July 7th, 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***, July 7th meeting will start with "Finding Your Own Way Back From Grief".

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccica79@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.

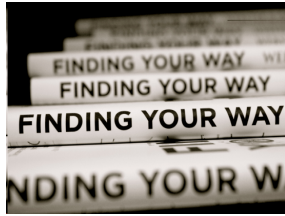
For a free Picture Button of your child, call Connie at (310) 292-5381.

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The **Thursday, July 7th** meeting will start with "Find your own way back from grief." The intense pain, sorrow, hopes, dreams, and love for our child swirls through our mind constantly.



We just want to go back to "Before". "After" is just too hard. The death of a child is the harshest blow life can offer. To make it worse, it is a pain we must each overcome individually. Each parent must find their own way back from grief. Our grief is a necessary process that we must go through in order to maintain our wholeness and sanity. Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We will eventually learn to live a meaningful life, despite our tragedy. We will learn many lessons as we fight our way back from grief. Some problems will be expected, others will blind-side us. Expectations that we will be over our grief and back to our old self on other's timetables may become a constant encounter. It is up to us to acknowledge that there is no timetable for grief. There is no "right" way to grieve. Everyone grieves differently, but in the following articles bereaved parents and siblings share their thoughts.

Most People Who Suffer A Loss Experience One or More of the Following:

- * Feel tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- * Have an empty feeling in their stomach and lose their appetite.
- * Feel guilty at times and angry at other times.
- * Feel restless and look for activity but find it difficult to concentrate.
- * Sense the loved one's presence, as in finding themselves expecting the person to walk in the door at the usual time, hearing their voice, or seeing their face.
- * Wander aimlessly, forget, and don't finish things they have started.
- * Have difficulty sleeping; dream of their loved one.
- * Experience an intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased.
- * Assume mannerisms or traits of their loved one.
- * Feel guilty or angry over things that happened or didn't happen in the relationship with the deceased.
- * Feel their mood change over the slightest things.
- * Cry at unexpected times.

All of these are natural and normal grief responses. It is important to cry and talk with

people when you need to do so.

By learning about the process of grief and learning also to express our feelings concerning our experience, we are helped to arrive at a healthy readjustment of our lives and a reinvestment of our emotional energy.

--Irma Escue - Hospice Bereavement Team
Boulder, CO

The Gap (What We Wish Others Understood About The Loss of Our Child)

The gap between those who have lost children and those who have not is profoundly difficult to bridge.

No one whose children are well and intact can be expected to understand what parents who have lost children have absorbed, what they bear. Our children now come to us through every blade of grass, every crack in the sidewalk, every bowl of breakfast cereal, every kid on a scooter. We seek contact with their atoms — their hairbrushes, toothbrushes, their clothing.

We reach out for what was integrally woven into the fabric of our lives, now torn and shredded. A black hole has been blown through our souls and, indeed, it often does not allow the light to escape. It is a difficult place. For us to enter there is to be cut deeply and torn anew, each time we go there, by the jagged edges of our loss. Yet we return, again and again, for that is where our children now reside. This will be so for years to come and it will change us, profoundly. At some point, in the distant future, the edges of that hole will have tempered and softened, but the empty space will remain—a life sentence.

Our friends will change through this. There is no avoiding it. We grieve for our children in part, through talking about them, and our feelings for having lost them. Some go there with us; others cannot and, through their denial, add a further measure, however unwitting, to an already heavy burden. Assuming that we may be feeling "better" six months later is simply "to not get it". The excruciating and isolating reality that bereaved parents feel is hermetically sealed from the nature of any other human experience. Thus it is a trap—those whose compassion and insight we most need are those for whom we abhor the experience that would allow them that sensitivity and capacity. And yet, somehow, there are

those, each in their own fashion, who have found a way to reach us and stay, to our immeasurable comfort. They have understood, again each in their own way, that our children remain our children through our memory of them. Their memory is sustained through speaking about them and our feelings about their death. Deny this and you deny their life. Deny their life and you have no place in ours.

We recognize that we have moved to an emotional place where it is often very difficult to reach us. Our attempts to be normal are painful, and the day to day carries a silent, screaming anguish that accompanies us, sometimes from moment to moment. Were we to give it its own voice, we fear we would become truly unreachable and so we remain "strong" for a host of reasons, even as the strength saps our energy and drains our will. Were we to act out our true feelings, we would be impossible to be with. We resent having to act normal, yet we dare not do otherwise.

People who understand this dynamic are our gold standard. Working our way through this over the years will change us as does every experience—and extreme experience changes one extremely. We know we will have actually managed to survive when, as we have read, it is no longer so painful to be normal. We do not know who we will be at that point nor who will still be with us.

We have read that the gap is so difficult that, often, bereaved parents must attempt to reach out to friends and relatives or risk losing them. This is our attempt. For those untarnished by such events, who wish to know in some way what they, thankfully, do not know, read this. It may provide a window that is helpful for both sides of the gap.

Bereavement is like a journey;

we travel from one place of happiness, searching for another place of happiness to call home.

Know that there is hope. Know that many, many bereaved parents who have been in the same painful place that you are in now, have found life meaningful again.

Know that you will too.

--TCF Bluegrass Chapter

I'm Not Contagious

In the two or three weeks immediately following my brother Nick's death, I received numerous calls, cards, plants, flowers, and offers of

help. My loss sat on the front burner of many wonderful people's stoves for about 21 days. I was in their thoughts, prayers, and blessings.

Unfortunately, many issues and events vie for front-burner status. Part of me understood why the love, attention, and concern started to recede. Another part of me wanted to throw a full-blown temper tantrum live at Madison Square Garden. "My brother, Nick, is dead. Gone. Finished. Have you forgotten?" I would cry, and have a grand time berating others for overlooking my plight. No wonder I resonated so deeply with Madeline Sharple's poem, "Aftermath." I could have written the same poem, simply replacing her word "son" with my word "brother."

In my fantasy, I would tattoo a large "G" for grieving on my exposed forehead so that no one could possibly forget what had recently happened. They would have to remember to ask me, "How are you doing?" Either that or they'd be feigning blindness!

The front-page headline of my imaginary newspaper would always have "Martha's Brother Has Died" as its leading story. Political scandals, tragedies, and stock market crashes would never get top billing. I suppose I would have some fine arguments with my imaginary editor about this! When it's our loss, it is the headliner for quite a while. When it's someone else's loss, it just isn't. In a journal entry written seven months after Nick died, I wrote:

"Inside of me, there 's a voice screaming to be heard." "No, you don't get it' I just lost my brother! Lost my brother! One of the most significant people in my life! Don't you dare move on to the next topic... I'm still on this topic and am not ready to move on and won't be ready to move on for quite some time."

My heartfelt request to the world goes something like this: "If you feel like you don't know what to say, don't say much. Just show up! I have not just come down with strep throat! I'm not contagious!"

When you have strep throat, a kiss, hug, or even a handshake is discouraged. The well-wisher will keep a distance, offer sincere apologies, and the sick person will understand. But we don't have strep throat. We have grief. It's not a sickness, but a condition with symptoms and circumstances. Sorrow. Pain. Longing. Regrets. Tears. Unanswered questions. Forms to fill out. Belongings to give away. Shock. Insomnia.



Memories, good and bad. Wills. Death certificates.

These symptoms last much longer than two weeks or a month; perhaps some will last a lifetime. They may be acute at first, but they' don't go away when the initial wave of sympathy cards, visits, and other greetings ebbs. The intensity of the symptoms may ease, but they do persist. Unfortunately, many well-wishers disappear or forget or have new things on their own front-burners. Under our breath, we grievors are saying, "Please don't disappear. I need you." We don't really need that much, yet some friends and family members seem to feel like attending to us is the equivalent of running a marathon. In fact, all that's needed is empathy... that ability to walk a mile in our moccasins, as the old saying goes.

What do we need? The answer may be a bowl of chicken soup because we've forgotten to eat. We may need some groceries or a prescription filled at the drugstore. We may even need some solitude. However, don't confuse solitude with solitary confinement or quarantine. We are neither dangerous nor contagious. Well-wishers accrue karmic gold stars for showing up at a time when many can't.

We may need someone's presence or vitality or willingness to listen. We may need someone to hear the same story or memory or lament twice, three times, or more. We need others to let us move through our grief at whatever pace our particular journey selects. We do not need to be talked out of our feelings, unless we have asked for it. We don't need cheering up or problem-solving, unless we have asked for them. No one can hasten our return to pre-loss levels of activity or interest. The gift of attention we need is one that permits us to just be where we are in our grieving process. We will get better. Our condition will improve, but it takes time and patience: gifts we can give to ourselves and hope to receive from others.

In my teens, I took a walk on a city street in Athens, Greece. It was easy to distinguish the tourists from the natives. The tourists were in light-colored clothing while the denizens of Athens were, seemingly without exception, in black. Black skirts, dresses, pants, sweaters, shoes, socks, hats, and coats. Black. This was long before wearing all-black clothing was considered hip, vogue, or Goth. Sometime later, I was told that the

Greek tradition is that you wear black for a year after someone close to you dies. My lasting impression of Greece, other than its stunning beauty and ancient architecture, was that an awful lot of people had died there.

In our country, grief can be invisible. If you met someone who was unaware that you'd recently suffered a major loss, how would that person know? Perhaps you appear a bit sadder or more distracted than usual. More than likely, you look much the same on the outside as you looked the day or two before your beloved died. By comparison, if you were walking on that same sidewalk with crutches, it would be instantly obvious that something was not right. Your injury would elicit a question and open the door to further conversation about the trauma: "What happened?" "Are you okay?" In the aftermath of a death, crutches are not prescribed for treatment of our heartache. Because there is nothing visible to signal our grief to the outside world, it's easy to feel even more contagious.

We rarely get to see the pain of those still living, though perhaps feeling like the living dead as they suffer with the loss in their everyday, moment-to-moment existence. Much energy is directed toward containing the suffering, even in settings such as funeral homes, gravesites, or temples. Many a prescription for mild tranquilizers or sedatives is filled after the death and before the funeral in an effort to suppress any show of emotion. In my psychotherapy practice and elsewhere, I hear grievors consumed with the challenge of hiding their tears, looking strong, and by all means not losing "it."

I salute those Greek women, men, and children who expose their loss in their choice of clothing day after day. If we only had some universal symbol, some universal color or badge that would announce to the world that we are grieving... shouldering a fragile and vulnerable myriad of swarming feelings and emotions underneath our clothing and inside our skin... perhaps then others could and would remember to attend to us. Our grief is frequently silent and out of sight — an experience not too different from that of those who have been quarantined with a virulent ailment. When we're without support, our feelings start to swarm; there is nowhere to go with them, and no one to talk to about them. It becomes difficult to temper our thoughts or feelings when we feel no link to the outside world.



I like to think I'm wearing my grief badge when I talk or write about my brother's death. By sharing my experience with others, my grief becomes more visible. I join a community, hear and feel nods of recognition and support, and I feel a lot less contagious. This isn't a community that any of us wanted to join, as the entry requirements are very painful. It is, nonetheless, a loving community with sympathetic arms to hold us. What a gift to receive in the aftermath of such a profound loss.

--By Martha Clark Scala Reprinted from the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends, "We Need Not Walk Alone. Martha Clark Scala is a psychotherapist whose brother died at age 45.

The Little Things

Often, even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears?

Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the family laundry could make you cry or that getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell:

"One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people never know about.

--Anne Tyler, TCF/Sacramento Valley, CA

"The hurt never completely goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it."

--Richard Edler TCF South Bay/LA CA



Beatriz' Story

I'm mad at her for leaving. I have found that it is OK to go the grave and cry and scream at the deceased; to let them know that you are hurt, that you are devastated, that they chose to leave you. Then come the questioning stage, and you try to bargain; why did she do it? Why couldn't she have given you a clue of what she was going to do? All the while the guilt stage is ever present. You ask yourself a thousand times, what could I have done to prevent what happened? The "if only" question continues to persist. Finally, I believe there is an acceptance stage. I have not gone through that stage yet so I cannot determine or let you know how it feels at this point in time. I know I will go through it, maybe months or even years from now, but I have faith that I will come to accept my sister's death.

It is very hard to go through the pain, when the depression starts to creep up on me. It seems like I will never get through this pain and sometimes guilt; but I know it is OK. I miss my sister, Maria, and I know she is watching me as well as helping me when I ask for her help. Writing this paper is hard because I am talking about this terrible pain I feel inside that I do not wish on anyone, not even my worst enemy.

When people tell you it is going to be "OK" it is not to mock you, because how can it be OK when your sister is gone from you forever? Those people mean you no harm, they just don't know what to say to heal the pain you feel inside. They don't understand and never will. I miss my sister, and I will never forget her and the last words she spoke to me the night before she died. "I love you and good night." Good night to you my angel, I know you are resting and not suffering anymore. I ask you to please help me be strong in order to face the tough roads ahead, and also to give me your love and compassion. I want you to know, Maria, that I yearn to hold you and to tell you that I love you and always will.

Clearly teenage suicide is a reality. Teens are not just seeking attention; they are seeking love, compassion, and understanding. They need someone to help them try to deal with the pain. God bless the angels like my sister that went to heaven before their time.

-- by Beatriz Bravo, In honor of my sister, Maria Bravo reprinted from Obelisk, Chicago, Illinois,

The Things We'll Never Get to Do

Now as we plan to celebrate the Fourth of July,
 I can't help but think about
 how we'll never get to see
 Your excitement at watching the
 fireworks in the sky.
 There are so many things
 We'll never get to share with you,
 You were taken from us too soon,
 We'll never get to show you the man in the moon.
 We'll never get to see you learn to crawl
 or pull yourself up,
 or teach you to drink from a cup.
 You'll never get to take your first baby steps
 Or feel the tickle of grass under your little feet,
 We'll never get to share with you your
 first ice cream treat.
 You'll never get to have your first birthday cake.
 Those first day of school pictures
 you'll never get to take.
 We'll never get to hear the first song you learn to
 sing,
 Never get to show you a beautiful butterfly
 as it flutters its wings.
 We'll never know the first words you might have
 said,
 We'll never get to hear you say "Goodnight Daddy"
 as we put you to bed.
 Your brothers will never hear you say their names
 or pronounce them in a funny way,
 giving them both nicknames to make fun of some
 day!
 They'll never get to teach you how to catch a ball,
 or how to ride your first bike
 and catch you when you fall.
 During those two months and six days
 we had the chance to hold you
 and tell you how much we loved you,
 We never knew you would not get to hug us back
 and tell us that you loved us too.
 When your father and I heard your first cry
 when you were born,
 Our thoughts were about all of the things
 we wanted to share with you,
 Now all we think about are all
 the things we'll never get to do.
 --Peggy Wills, TCF Atlanta, GA In Memory of her
 son Jarod Robert Wills

Seasoned Greivers...

Summer Thoughts

Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "It's not fair!" I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be.

In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I determined that this summer would not be an eternity: I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like flowers, and working in my garden. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course I still have times of sadness; I know I always will. But I have decided that in the process of grieving we close so many doors, the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child, but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel that way, and I



know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy this summer as he would have done.

--Libby Gonzalez, TCF, Huntsville, AL

Newly Bereaved...

Physical Reactions To Loss



A sorrow that has no vent in tears makes other organs weep. When the stress of an emotional injury is felt, there will be warning signs in the body. Expressing emotional pain indirectly through physical symptoms may be more acceptable in some families and more worthy of attention. But it is very hard on the body and it can be dangerous. When you don't express your emotional pain directly, your body may do it for you.

Grief can cause any of these physical symptoms:

- * Low energy: needing more rest; tiring more quickly; feeling generally fatigued.
- * Hyperactivity: an intense state of arousal or panicky feeling; bursts of physical energy; difficulty sitting still; needing to move around.
- * Crisis response: elevated heart rate, high blood pressure, muscle tension, dizziness, weakness, headaches, not feeling well, tightness in the throat and chest, shortness of breath, dry mouth, feeling overwhelmed.
- * Susceptibility to illness: suppression of the body's immune system.
- * Feeling off balance, uncoordinated.
- * Nausea.
- * Temporary hair loss.
- * Internalizing, or taking on symptoms of the illness your loved one had.
- * Erratic eating and sleeping patterns: insomnia, weight loss or gain.
- * Susceptibility to the abuse of drugs, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and food.
- * Heaviness; feeling as if you're made of lead.
- * Feeling "out of sync" with your body.

- * Distorted perception of time and distance.

Caring for yourself won't erase your grief, but it will offer a welcome respite from it. Pampering yourself with "food for the soul" (such as a massage, manicure, pedicure, facial or bath) releases body tension and makes you feel nurtured. Even though your energy is low and you don't feel like establishing a healthy routine, force yourself to do it anyway. Pay careful attention to your need for nutrition, rest and relaxation, exercise and human contact.

Nutrition can suffer because appetites often shift after loss. In an effort to comfort and nurture yourself, you may eat more than usual, or you may have trouble eating anything at all. Stress can interfere with the absorption of important nutrients, while fats and sugars deplete energy.

Rest and relaxation are essential. Because rest relieves, restores and refreshes you, it is important that you make time in your day for "mindless" activity, or get away for a relaxing weekend. Your usual sleep pattern may be disrupted in the first few weeks of grief. You may not sleep well at all, or you may sleep more than usual as a way to avoid or shut out the pain.

Exercise is good for you, since regular physical activity stimulates the release of biochemicals in your body that relieves pain, alleviates stress and enhances your sense of well being. Exercise increases your circulation, stimulates your heart, cleanses your body, discharges negative energy, and gets you out and about.

Human contact is basic human need. Touching, hugging, holding and having contact with another is comforting and healing.

Suggestions for coping with physical Symptoms:

- * Ask someone to stay with you to help you focus and prioritize what needs to get done.
- * Inform your physician what's happen in your life, so your blood pressure, weight changes and other health indicators can be monitored.
- * Know you will make it through these episodes, even if it doesn't feel like it at the time.
- * Recognize that your thinking processes, coordination and reaction time aren't up to par right now.
- * Breathe. Frequently throughout the day, stop what you're doing, take a deep breath, hold it, then exhale very slowly.
- * If your diet is not well balanced, try supplementing it with vitamins and minerals. Add

fruits, vegetables and grains. Eat smaller, more frequent meals rather than three big ones. Eat foods you like that are easy to fix and digest, and include a special treat now and then. Drink plenty of water. Find an exercise you can do (stretching, walking, swimming, dancing, swinging or swaying to music) and set aside time to do it regularly.

* Reach out and touch someone. Cuddle children and pets; hold hands with your friends; get a massage.

* Attend to personal grooming (hair, skin, nails, wardrobe) that will enhance your body image.

There is truth in the saying that when you look good, you feel good too.

--By Dr Henry Maudsley

Lifted with thanks from TCF Queensland newsletter

For Friends And Family...

Recently I was talking to one of my close friends about what I had shared with my Compassionate Friends group the night before when he asked me, "Why do you still go to meetings, aren't you over that yet"?

I told him that I would never get over the death of my son and that I need to go to meetings to keep me on this journey I've been given. Later that day, after I had time to think about what he had said, I asked him why he didn't think that I needed to go to meetings anymore. He said because it seemed as though I had it all together, I come to work everyday, I joke with the guys, I seem to enjoy myself at functions we have. He couldn't see where it was that I needed help. I told him that even though it looks like I'm OK on the outside, there are a lot of times I'm crying my eyes out on the inside, my heart is broken. I go to meeting to share my feelings with other grieved parents to be sure that I am not losing my mind. That the feelings I still have six years after my sons death are the same as others this far into their grief, proves that I am not the only one who feels this way.

I thank God that in our group we can share these feelings and help one another thru another day, week or month. I also go to meeting because I remember that the first time I walked into a Compassionate Friends meeting, there was someone there to welcome me and tell me that even though I can't see it or feel it now, that it will get better, not over it, just better. Those few minutes and a few encouraging words may have

saved my life. Now I am the one at the door and I am the one with the few minutes of my time and a few encouraging words that I have learned on this journey and through the tears and pain and suffering of the loss of my child I can tell you that it does get better with time, not over it, just better.

-- Jeffery's Dad, TCF Orange County CA

Helpful Hint...



Time And Loss

Time moves forward, yet you want it to go backward, You can go there only in memory. The memories are yours forever, to indulge in whenever you want to. You grieve the loss of the memories that you would be making now, but they can't be made. You are in a process that requires you to be yourself, when you'd rather hide from everything. If you could make the pain go away by being angry, you'd be as angry as hell. If you could kill the pain by crying, you'd cry an ocean of tears. Healing takes time, whether you spend it in memories, self-pity, regret, hiding resentment or crying. Therefore, give yourself that time. You deserve all the time it will take you. Take all you need for yourself. Take time to let your mind rest, letting it drift whichever way it wants to, like lazy clouds across the sky. Take time to grieve, even if you have to "fit it into your schedule." Take time to seek comfort. God always cares, and He sends you people who care. Enjoy the comfort. You deserve all that you need.

--Roury TCF Pocatello, ID

Welcome...



Welcome to TCF

Did you walk through these doors
Scared and desperate for hope

Are you here for the first time
to find ways to cope
Have you been here before
And found that sliver of light
The one that seemed impossible
in the darkness of grief's night
Have you finally found peace
From a place deep within
Do you come to share their love
From where it has always been
Here we wish to listen
To the stories held so dear
We want to share the laughter
And the hidden, darkest fear
We want to see the pictures
Hear their name spoken aloud
We want to hear the memories
The sad, funny and the proud
Whatever your reason
Whatever brought you here
We are a special kind of family
One that understands each tear
There is one profound truth
That we compassionately live by
Love lives on forever and ever
Love did not and will never die
In a world gone so chaotic
Where stability has been thrown
Know that here among all of us
You need never walk alone
--Tanya Lord



Book Review...

The River Of Memories by Patti Davis. Patti shares: "Death is an awkward subject. It is a language none of us feel fluent in, no matter how much experience we've had. We reach for words and hope they're the right ones. What matters, though, is the effort. It matters that someone else is thinking about you on a day that might, over time, get easier but will always be heavier than the rest. It matters that a friend shares how he's gotten through his own sad anniversaries. It's how we look out for one another, help one another across rough terrain. The world moves on; we all know that. But anyone who has lost a loved one knows you never move on from missing that person and marking the day he left. We want someone else to remember, too, so we're not sitting by that riverbank alone."

I Know You, I Know Who You Are ...

I see your face reflected in mine.
Ravaged by tears, distorted by the pain of a lifetime.
You are a parent of a child who now lives on in your heart, joined in spirit, though physically torn apart.
To live between two worlds is now our task
To be recognized by others, we all have a mask
But in the abyss, in the darkness of the in between we often fall on our knees, tearing away the pretense and silently scream.
I know who you are ... your voice sounds as familiar as mine.
It calls out, vibrating throughout all of eternity, searching, trying to find.
Where are you my child?
I hear you in my mind, but I cannot find the way
Somehow I have gotten lost,
where are all of my yesterdays?
In the void, a child's voice has fallen silent.
Deafening silence, echoing cries ...
We are left to follow each other in the darkness, always asking "Why"?
Into the unknown, we stumble along.
The sun will rise and another day will begin.
But the only light I can see is in the outstretched hand of a kindred soul, another grieving friend.
I know who you are ... your heart is shattered, your soul is broken, just like mine ...
And though the pieces may fit back together, one tiny fragment at a time
we will never again be whole,
for there is a gap in our lives where our child should be
the child that lives in our hearts, dances deep in our souls, laughs in our memories.
I know who you are ... I can feel your pain.
We will never be the same
I cry the same tears, we have the same fears
Alone in a crowd, we both cried aloud
as our dreams came to an end.
I know you, my grieving friend.
You are not alone,
look in the mirror and you will see
standing next to you ... is a reflection of me.
--Lisa Comstock, Florence, KY

"Those we have held in our arms for a little while,
we hold in our hearts forever."
--Author unknown



Our Children Remembered



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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Connor Aslay
Born: 5/99 Died: 7/18
Mother: Erin Aslay

Jeremiah Bell
Born: 1/88 Died: 6/15
Mother: Angela Alvarez

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Robert Justin Fields
Born: 1/00 Died: 1/00
Parents: Loree & Bob Fields

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

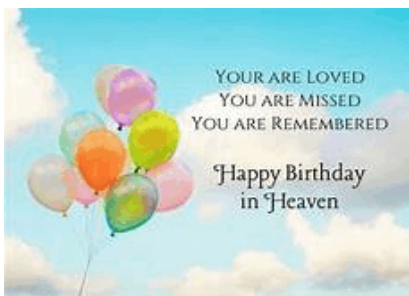
Whitney Marie Young
Born: 8/87 Died: 11/06
Parents: Marlene & Steve Young

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

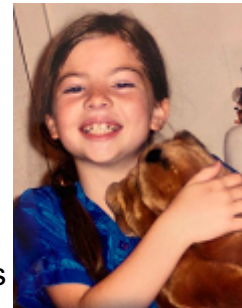
* For corrections or to add your child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and leave a message.



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: Emily Matilda Kass June 1995 - March 2006



For Emily Matilda,

Forever in our hearts, always in our thoughts, and forever 10 3/4... it is hard to believe that Miss Em would be turning 27 years old.

We still see your smile, hear your laugh, and not one to be shy about expressing an opinion, we imagine exactly what you would say regarding just about everything.

Emily had a list of the things she wanted/planned to do with her life and I have no doubt she would be in the midst of fulfilling them with style, panache and a joyful spirit... I'm just not sure where she'd be keeping the seven limousines.

Missing you always. Happy Birthday Sweetie.
All our love, Mom and Jessica

A Birthday Tribute to: Eric Douglas Vines July 1977 - July 1991



Dear Eric,

It's almost birthday time again. As I listened to the neighbors' kids playing, I thought about all the wonderful summer days I spent with you, Eric. I am grateful that we had that time to make special memories in your life.

In the beginning of my grief, I never thought I would remember your birthdays without tears and the pain of losing you. But, with time and hard work, that has changed. That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of losing our child. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience.

Now, when something reminds me of you, I

lovingly think of you and remember the smile you always had. I remember the years spent with you and what we have shared, both good and bad. I will always miss your sweet voice and your unconditional love. For all the smiles and tears, for all of the love and laughter, and above all, for being the son that you were, I will carry you in my heart forever.

Happy Birthday, Love, Mom

For Siblings...

Anger



Anger usually makes you think of hard times and hurtful things. You may think of anger as bad, but it's really a very helpful and useful feeling. Anger acts as an internal thermometer or a gauge that tells you when something in your life is off balance. When things don't turn out the way you think they should, your natural instinct is to get angry. When you get angry, your feelings are telling you that something in your life needs attention.

I think getting mad comes when you get something you don't want or you don't get something you really do want. When somebody you care about dies, you hurt, you feel pain, you miss them, and there is nothing you can do to bring them back. Part of this frustration comes out as anger.

You may be angry at your person for dying. You may be angry at the doctors. You may be angry at God for allowing this to happen. You may be at family members who grieve differently. You may be mad at friends who don't understand. You may be angry at yourself for not feeling better more quickly, and/or for things you did or didn't say.

Anger makes energy. That can be good or bad. If you use anger to hurt yourself or others, your anger becomes a negative. For example, if you intentionally hurt someone's feelings out of anger, then chances are they will feel bad and so will you. It may make you feel better for a few minutes, but this feeling usually doesn't last.

Angry energy also can have good effects. Anger can push you to change things. You may say, "Enough of this!" and find ways to move or better ways of coping. You can let your anger out in healthy ways, like writing, drawing, exercise, talking, screaming, punching a pillow, or even

crying. Be creative!

Anger that is not expressed builds up inside. If your anger builds up, it can come out in spurts, like:

- * Messing up a class because you feel mad at the teacher.
- * Exploding and hitting someone.
- * Yelling at someone you don't even know.

Anger is like cement - if it sits inside of you, it can harden and become hard to break. That can make you bitter, or you can become so angry and frustrated that you no longer care. Don't let that happen to you!

When you feel angry try:

- * running,
- * hitting your bed with a tennis racket or a towel,
- * turning up your stereo and yelling really loud,
- * talking to someone who cares about you.

Use your anger instead of letting your anger use you.

--Excerpt from "When Death Walks In" reprinted from HopeLine, Syracuse, NY,

Do I Have To?

Mom, do I have to stop loving my brother because he is not here?

Will I forget all about him because he's not near? I remember all the things we did together, even though we were very young.

I laugh and feel warm each time I think of a particularly funny one.

Sometimes I get so angry that he's no longer here to share,

But I know he knows it's only because of how much I still care.

I miss him, so even though at times we didn't agree,

Just knowing he was there made things feel safe for me.

He always felt he had to be my strong, protective big brother,

And that's a bond we'll always share forever with each other.

He tried to protect me even when he, too, was just scared.

No, I won't stop loving that big brother of mine, Not now, not ever, not till the end of time.

He will always be a part of what makes me be me. And that's the part of our love that will live eternally.

--By Jackie Rosen, TCF N. Dade/S. Broward, FL

For Grandparents...



Your Granddaughter Asks What You Think of Tattoos?

Careful, you tell yourself, careful.
 This may be some teenage test you can't afford to fail.
 She's seventeen, and full of surprises.
 Her mother – your daughter – is four years gone.
 And mostly the two of you bear this injustice quietly,
 as though somehow grief is your guilt.
 Careful, you tell yourself,
 Do not judge.
 on no account sound old.
 Aim for neutral, fall back on the law;
 Tell her she must wait at least a year.
 I know, she says, and smiles.
 But do you want to see?
 And for just a breath you hesitate
 on another question you're not sure how to answer.
 Life has shown you too many wrongs
 which can never be corrected.
 Do you really need to see another one?
 But your eyes widen on a miracle
 when the girl lifts her shirt to show
 The small blue message curling across the ribs
 beneath her heart.
 You recognize the writing,
 know the slope and shape of every letter
 Because it is your daughter's.
 Among her mother's things
 the child has found a journal,
 and copied precisely a line,
 then had it etched into her flesh,
 and her memory and her future.
 In her mother's hand, her mother's words –
 This delicate, elastic, indelible truth –
 I will love you always.
 --NSW Australia TCF Focus newsletter

From Our Members...

Butterfly Wings, Bricks and Lead

When I saw her load of grief, it looked to me to be merely a light load of butterfly wings, as compared to my full load of heavy bricks. Then I saw another man, and he seemed to be carrying a

small load of lead. But as I watched her step on the scales bearing her load of butterfly wings, the scales read "one ton." When he stepped on the scales with his load of lead, the scales also read "one ton." I knew my grief-load of bricks would weigh more, but those scales read for me, "one ton." Our loads of butterfly wings, lead and bricks weighed exactly the same to the one carrying that particular load of grief.

We bereaved parents often feel resentment when a non-bereaved person speaks about our child's death. HOW can THAT PERSON know or even dream of how I feel or what I am going through? These feelings may be justified. But when we begin to feel resentment toward another bereaved parent "That child's death was easy compared to my child's death," "I have suffered more than she/he ever did" —we should remember that each of our grief-loads weights two thousand pounds to the one under it. Compared to Rose Kennedy, who had one child in a mental institution, and lost one daughter and three sons in violent deaths, my grief-load begins to look as if it were made of gossamer soap bubbles, but when I again step on that scale, it still reads, "one ton."

Our grief-loads may appear to weigh less because we who are under them have grown stronger through time and the grief process maturation. The load actually weighs no less; it is we who have grown stronger and can carry it more easily. Sometimes we can even completely ignore the weight that is still there. Always be careful in judging another's grief-load. Remember the lead, butterfly wings and those bricks, and how they all weigh the same to the one under that load of grief.

-- Tom Crouthamel, TCF/Sarasota, FL 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: July 1st for August 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 |
| survivorsofselfharm.com | alivealone.org |
| taps.org (military death) | angelmoms.com |
| save.org (suicide/depression) | |
| pomc.com (families of murder victims) | |
| grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths) | |
| www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide) | |
| Griefwords.com (for grandparents) | |

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

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 Eric Vines, July 1977 - July 1991. Happy Birthday! I will light another candle on your birthday cake and wish you were here to enjoy it with us.

We love and miss you, Love, Mom, Kelly and Joey

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

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

In loving memory of _____
 Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____
 Tribute _____

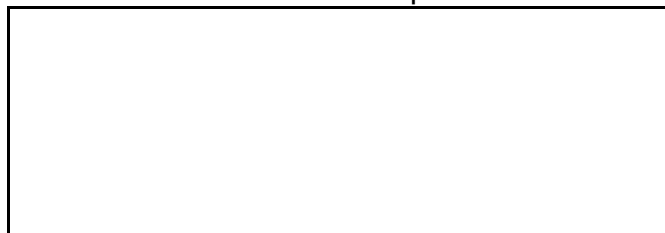
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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