



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

August 2022 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be Aug. 4th, 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***, Aug. 4th meeting will start with "The Ask-It-Basket".

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, Aug. 4th** meeting will start with "The Ask-it-basket."

This month we will be doing the "Ask It Basket". We will all pick up a blank card or two and write questions down that we would like answered, and then drop them in the basket. Then the leaders will assemble the questions and as a group, we will try and come up with answers. With any luck, some other parent will have experienced something similar and will be able to help you.

This is an opportunity to anonymously ask something you are uncomfortable bringing up in person, but would like help with. We do this once a year and although the questions vary, the answers usually help someone.

One year a rather newly bereaved person asked why we do this when we have the open discussion at each meeting. When I explained that some people are uncomfortable asking in person, or in front of their spouse, it made more sense to him. He had many questions written out on 3 X 5 cards which he brought to the meeting. Many were the same questions others asked. It turned out to be the opening that this couple needed to open the lines of communication without all the tears and sidetracking that usually happened when they tried to talk.

Sometimes it is easier to come up with questions when you have time to think about them. I encourage you to take a moment to think about your questions and jot a few down, either at home or before the meeting gets started.

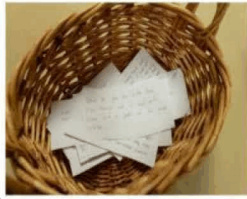
The following five articles are from *The Ask It Basket*, an educational column written by bereaved parents based on their own personal experiences of what may have been helpful to them.

My friends think I go to the cemetery too often. What is normal?

Many people report they went to the cemetery every day for weeks, then later monthly, and now not as often. Others never felt a need to go back after the funeral. The general consensus is to go as often as you need to go. Some people felt they needed to go just because the death was so unbelievable and they had to see their child's grave to begin to absorb the impact of the death.

My spouse doesn't react the same way I do and

The Ask-It basket



it is frustrating for me.

One of the greatest fallacies in thinking is the belief that others think just like we think, and that others process information just like we do. No two people grieve alike. We are unique individuals who bring our own set of preconceived ideas to our daily life. We can not expect others to do it "our way". You might try a conversation where you explain your needs and try to understand your partner's needs. You might also ask yourself the question, "Why does my way have to be the only way?" Remember, we all had a unique, special and different relationship with our child. We remember different things about our child and we miss different things.

What is normal grief?

Dr. Nancy Hogan, a bereaved sibling and grief researcher describes normal grief as anything you do as long as it doesn't hurt yourself or any other person.

People told me after I made it through the first year that it would be OK. I'm in my second year and it is bad.

Many refer to the second year as the "Terrible Two's". Most people find the second year following the death of a son or daughter is tough. They say that now that they have been through the "firsts" that they now are beginning to realize that yes it is true - my child died.

For many, it is like "coming out of a fog" and seeing the facts for real. It is especially disappointing for those of us who believed what we had heard about being OK after the first year.

Some who have never attended a meeting begin to come in their second year so they can have the support of others who have made the journey through that time period.

People have said some very hurtful things to me that they apparently thought would be helpful. Why do they say these things?

Everyone who looked at this question had similar experiences so don't feel singled out. People often say things they believe will make you feel better and end up hurting you without intent. For some people, the statements they make are unconsciously designed to make them feel safe, instead of comforting you. They realize that if it could happen to you, then it could happen to them.

Others admitted that they too said similar things to people before their child died. Most agreed no malice was intended. We just didn't know any better. We wish now we could take those things we said back.

Be Good to Yourself This Summer

Summertime is a time to get away and renew yourself. When you are grieving, it is even more important to relax and take time to be good to yourself. Grief work takes physical, emotional and spiritual energy.

Here are some mini vacations: Get outside as often as possible. The warmth of the sun and soft breezes help you to feel more alive. Exercise helps work off frustration, anger, and depression. Search out local parks, nature trails, country roads- even a walk around your own block. Brisk walking, bike riding, and swimming are good ways to reduce tension.

Try to visit places where there is water. Watching water and hearing it lap against the shore is soothing. As the waves recede, try to envision your grief receding; as the waves return, imagining them bring peace and comfort.

Escape into another world through a good mystery or spy novel. Read a book you enjoy - or go to the movies. Light reading or an entertaining movie helps to take your mind off your grief.

Don't push your grief down. Get it out into the open so you can deal with it and control it, or it will control you. Find and turn to a good listener. Attend a support group meeting. You will gain ideas on coping and meet those bereaved longer, who have survived their losses. The meetings can give you hope and knowledge that you are not alone. I hope "things" get easier for all of you. Please don't lose hope.

--Adapted from the HOPE Line, Buffalo, NY

My Champion Me – Let's Talk Self Compassion

On Tuesday 16th February TCF members assembled via Zoom to hear Sangeeta Mahajan's second talk about her personal journey of grief: My Champion, Me. Let's Talk Self-Compassion.

As in her first talk, her amazing serenity and

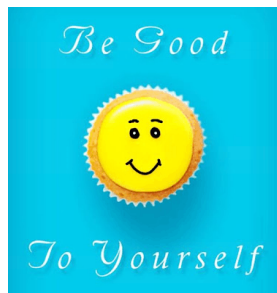
calm wisdom were instantly evident. How can it be only six years since she lost her beloved 20 year old son Saagar to suicide?

Describing the horrific and cataclysmic shock of losing her son she spoke of how instantly everything that she was and had been came into question. Her role as mother, doctor, friend, wife was now utterly threatened. The guilt and self-recrimination were total, not just things she perceived herself to have not done before Saagar's suicide but indeed every decision she had made about him since he was born. It did not matter that others were trying to comfort and support her, she thought it was all her fault, and, as she said "You are always with yourself" 24 hours a day and the self-torture is unremitting.

I think this resonated with many of the audience who commented that they are still struggling with this guilt many years on. Gradually Sangeeta began to be aware of the difference between her attitude to herself, and that shown by others to her. She saw that the compassion shown by others constituted a sensitivity to others' feelings and a commitment to doing something to alleviate another's suffering. She realized that her recovery depended on being able to do this for herself. She began asking herself "Am I a friend to me?"

She gave us a practical exercise to do, describing a time when she had left her house unlocked and she had arrived back to find thousands of pounds worth of belongings had been stolen. Firstly she asked us to write down what we would have said to Sangeeta, and everyone replied with positive and supportive comments. She then asked us to write down what we would have said to ourselves if it happened to us. It was astounding how critical, dismissive and unkind we were. What a powerful way of exposing our inner critical voice!

Sangeeta quoted the Buddha's saying that when we suffer misfortune two arrows fly our way. The first, the actual event, hits us without warning and we are unable to avoid it. The second arrow is more insidious, it is the self-torture and blame we mete out to ourselves because of the first arrow. We do not have to accept the second arrow because this time we have a choice. She says that there are three pillars of Self Compassion that can help us to deflect the second arrow these being the very framework of our recovery and journey to peace. This



resonated so clearly for me and it felt almost joyful to hear them described.

Self-kindness

This is the bedrock of physical compassion. Just as you would rock a crying baby, holding, stroking, soothing, this self-kindness speaks to our inner child, maybe our five-year-old self, reassuring and loving, promoting endorphins and oxytocin that calms and protects. As others have probably tried to do this for us, we can do it for ourselves. Our bereavements have created such a brittle and harsh space within us, self kindness is something that can soften and lighten our souls. There were comments from the audience about how difficult it is to go from self-blame to self-approration, and Sangeeta said it needs practice but does become much easier with time.

Common Humanity

This is the antidote to the disconnectedness we can feel from the world and our history. If we realize that everyone suffers in some way we should reach out to others, knowing that we have a common and nurturing bond. This is part of self-compassion. Our mind causes pain by judging others as we judge ourselves. We need to break down the barriers that stop us from engaging because a lack of connection is judgement.

Mindfulness

This gives us the ability to slow down and go into ourselves. This can be done via meditation or just sitting quietly, chasing away thoughts and centering on our hearts. This allows our parasympathetic system to soothe and calm us, to allow us to become more connected to ourselves and to connect to others. Sangeeta emphasizes how important it is to stay with ourselves, even when the pain is intense, and that to experience it and observe it stops us from judging. Incredibly she says that in this way we do not have to see our pain as bad. It just is, and by being fully present we feel part of a greater universal whole.

Sangeeta not only spoke with incredible poise and dignity but seemed to be really living her truth. Despite the excruciating pain of her loss, she demonstrated a calm commitment towards self-compassion and to those around her. She said that compassion is not complete if it does not include yourself. She then referred to the title of her talk and said that the three elements described above help you towards being your own champion.

A champion is someone who not only supports but fights for their cause, and this is what we should do for ourselves while connecting with others. She gave the analogy of a strong enduring tree outside her window, always present in all weathers, surrounded by different people and animals, ever connected to other trees via a network of underground roots.

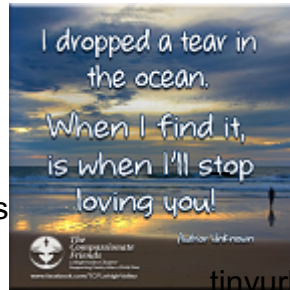
I think everyone was both hugely moved and educated by Sangeeta's talk. Her wisdom and strength and perception were outstanding. At the end many people asked how, being stuck in pain and guilt they could suddenly become more self-compassionate. Sangeeta replied that focusing on the heart rather than the head, always being kind and supportive to ourselves and others is a habit that needs dedicated practice, but ultimately our pain is universal, and knowing that we are part of a greater whole and we are linked

helps us. Sangeeta represents a beacon of light and hope to those of us on our bereavement journey and I think we all benefitted hugely from listening to her.

--Review by Lisa Mayland. You can listen to both Sangeeta's talks hosted by TCF on our YouTube channel at

[tinyurl.com/r9k5up84](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9k5up84)

-- UK TCF Compassion Spring



Senses

After 32 months of existing with the loss of my son, Jason, it amazes me how every aspect of my life has changed. There isn't a moment day, week, or month that goes by unaffected by this loss. Every nuance of everyday life brings fresh heartache. Even my senses don't let me forget.

Where I may not have noticed someone before, I see the back of Jason's head, the way he walked, someone wearing a baseball cap, or I see a blond toddler that reminds me of him. I see mothers at the mall with their sons— something we used to do. I see fathers and sons sparring and remember the good-natured tests of strength and wrestling that took place in the midst of my breakables. I hear words to a song in a commercial that I used to sing to him when he was a baby. I hear jokes about drunk drivers or people complaining about their children.

It's difficult to enjoy the smell of flowers without being taken back to the funeral home. I used to think it was only carnations, but it doesn't seem to

matter what kind of flowers they are. I smelled those funeral flowers for weeks after the funeral when there were no flowers around.

I only have to think about it and I can still feel his cold, hard arm through his shirt. I can feel the hug he gave me as he walked out the door that night for the last time. He was going out to celebrate his 23rd birthday and met his fate. I can remember the pride I felt for him and I can remember the crushing pain in my chest when it sank in that the chaplain was telling me he was gone.

I taste macaroni and cheeses and I think of the hundreds of times I made it for him because it was his favorite food. I taste pizza and remember the mother-son pizza nights. There were very few and they will never be again. There is no time left to make up the time and opportunities that were lost.

Watching TV is difficult. Even comedy shows hold pain. We were watching *Home Improvement* the other night and Tim and Jill were talking about pets and Tim made the comment ... "that's why we had kids instead of pets, because they last longer." Words and phrases just seem to jump right out and stab me in the heart. So many programs are impossible to watch.

I feel a sense of outrage when I hear or read about children thrown away by their parents or abused. I wish every parent could know what this feels like without suffering the actual loss. I think the world would be a better place if people cherished their children as the gifts that they are.

The sense that has changed the most for me, is my sense of fear. The things I fear have changed 180 degrees. Having just passed my 50th birthday, I no longer fear birthdays or death. I find I fear more the thought of trying to survive the years ahead without my son, my baby. But each birthday can be celebrated because they now bring me closer to being with him again and, in some strange way, it brings a kind of freedom from the depression most people feel as that number goes up every year. I also feel a sense of responsibility for living the life I have left to the best of my ability. I know it will be some time before I can find my sense of true joy again, if ever, but I know I will be searching for it.

--Carletta Ashby, TCF St Mary's County, MD



What I Wish More People Understood About Losing A Child.....

Four and half years after the death of my oldest son, I finally went to a grief support group for parents who have lost children. I went to support a friend who recently lost her son. I'm not sure I would've gone except that when I was in her shoes, four years ago, I wish I would've had a friend to go with me. Losing a child is the loneliest, most desolate journey a person can take and the only people who can come close to appreciating it are those who share the experience.

The meeting was a local chapter of The Compassionate Friends, an organization solely dedicated to providing support for those who have lost children, grandchildren or siblings. The facilitator was a tall gentleman who had lost his 17 year old son eight years ago. He opened the meeting by saying that dues to belong to the club are more than anyone would ever want to pay. Well, he couldn't be more correct: no one wants to belong to this group.

The group of incredible survivors included parents whose children had been killed by drunk drivers, murdered, accidental overdose, alcoholism, suicide and freak accidents. The children's ages ranged from 6-38 years old. When hearing the stories, I had a visceral reaction to being part of this "club," but was also humbled by the greatness of these mothers and fathers.

Most of what I share in this article came from this meeting, but also from my own experience of having lost a child and being four years into that lifelong journey of healing from deep grief. The following five tips can be your compass to help you navigate how to give support to grieving parents on a sacred journey they never wanted to take.

1. Remember our children.

The loss of children is a pain all bereaved parents share, and it is a degree of suffering that is impossible to grasp without experiencing it first hand. Often, when we know someone else is experiencing grief, our discomfort keeps us from approaching it head on. But we want the world to remember our child or children, no matter how young or old our child was.

If you see something that reminds you of my child, tell me. If you are reminded at the holidays or on his birthday that I am missing my son,

please tell me you remember him. And when I speak his name or relive memories relive them with me, don't shrink away. If you never met my son, don't be afraid to ask about him. One of my greatest joys is talking about Brandon.

2. Accept that you can't "fix" us.

An out-of-order death such as child loss breaks a person (especially a parent) in a way that is not fixable or solvable — ever! We will learn to pick up the pieces and move forward, but our lives will never be the same.

Every grieving parent must find a way to continue to live with loss, and it's a solitary journey. We appreciate your support and hope you can be patient with us as we find our way.

Please: don't tell us it's time to get back to life, that's it's been long enough, or that time heals all wounds. We welcome your support and love, and we know sometimes it hard to watch, but our sense of brokenness isn't going to go away. It is something to observe, recognize, accept.

3. Know that there are at least two days a year we need a time out.

We still count birthdays and fantasize what our child would be like if he/she were still living. Birthdays are especially hard for us. Our hearts ache to celebrate our child's arrival into this world, but we are left becoming intensely aware of the hole in our hearts instead. Some parents create rituals or have parties while others prefer solitude. Either way, we are likely going to need time to process the marking of another year without our child.

Then there's the anniversary of the date our child became an angel. This is a remarkable process similar to a parent of a newborn, first counting the days, then months then the one year anniversary, marking the time on the other side of that crevasse in our lives.

No matter how many years go by, the anniversary date of when our child died brings back deeply emotional memories and painful feelings (particularly if there is trauma associated with the child's death). The days leading up to that day can feel like impending doom or like it's hard to breathe. We may or may not share with you what's happening.

This is where the process of remembrance will help. If you have heard me speak of my child or supported me in remembering him/her, you will be able to put the pieces together and know when

these tough days are approaching.

4. Realize that we struggle every day with happiness.

It's an ongoing battle to balance the pain and guilt of outliving your child with the desire to live in a way that honors them and their time on this earth. remember going on a family cruise eighteen months after Brandon died. On the first day, I stood at the back of the ship and bawled that I wasn't sharing this experience with him. Then I had to steady myself, and recognize that I was also creating memories with my surviving sons, and enjoying the time with them in the present moment.

As bereaved parents, we are constantly balancing holding grief in one hand and a happy life after loss in the other.

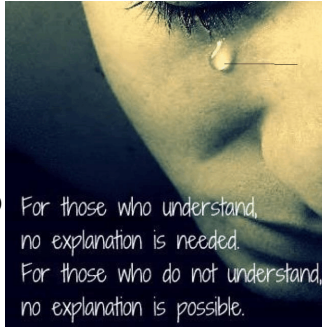
You might observe this when you are with us at a wedding, graduation or other milestone celebration. Don't walk away — witness it with us and be part of our process.

5. Accept the fact that our loss might make you uncomfortable.

Our loss is unnatural, out-of-order; it challenges your sense of safety. You may not know what to say or do, and you're afraid you might make us lose it. We've learned all of this as part of what we're learning about grief.

We will never forget our child. And in fact, our loss is always right under the surface of other emotions, even happiness. We would rather lose it because you spoke his/her name and remembered our child, than try and shield ourselves from the pain and live in denial.

--By Paula Stephens



Seasoned Grievers...

Does It Ever Get Any Better?

May 6th begins the 9th year without our daughter, Tiffanie. Whenever newly bereaved parents attend our meeting, they are in such incredible pain. In desperation they inevitably ask one question. "Does it ever get any better?"

Well, nine years later our loss is just as senseless and enormous as it was in 1996. But, we have learned to handle our grief without falling apart at the mention of Tiffanie's name. In essence we have become grief managers. We have developed a coping ability to

compartmentalize our grief, when we need to do so to function. Today, when we take a moment to grieve, we are now better able to consciously choose more private times and places. In the early years, we would just fall apart anywhere the mood struck.

I suspect there is some highly educated specialist out there somewhere who would proffer the theory that our grief management is really "grief avoidance". Or maybe they would argue that there has been no "acceptance" of our loss, and we simply need to "move on" and bring our grief to "closure." If so, go read another book doctor, because you just don't have a clue.

As time goes on, memories of our daughter become increasingly important. We want to recall every aspect of our daughter's life. When a friend tells us a new "Tiffanie" story, it is such a great gift. We gain a fresh insight into her life, and it makes us feel that we know her just a little better than we did before she left us.

There are still times even after nine years when our special grief drawer opens automatically and we experience that raw anguish all over again. A new obituary announcing that another family has lost a child opens that grief drawer for us. When a newly bereaved mom or dad attends a TCF meeting and can only manage tears, that drawer opens a little more. When we allow ourselves to imagine what Tiffanie's life would be like if she were still with us, the grief drawer pops right out of the desk. Other keys to open the grief drawer include college graduation announcements, wedding invitations, and baby announcements.

To me, the surprising difference after the passage of time is that grief has changed roles in my life. Rather than being something that paralyzes me with anguish, it has become a source of reassurance. Each time that drawer opens, I am reminded by the pain just how deeply we love her. That's love, not loved. We ache because we miss her, but we are so grateful to have had her in our lives. The grief has become the constant reminder of that love. I would rather live with this pain forever, then to never have experienced my daughter's love in this life.

--By Chuck Collins/BSF Chapter Co-Leader

Newly Bereaved...

My Son

I would like to share a very



special story about the moment I truly realized that here on earth is but a rest stop along the journey. Today is a "good" day. That's why I am able to write this because things, as we all know so well, are not always this clear.

My heart broke the evening of July 23, 1995. My son, Adam, at the age of 17, was shot in the center of the heart. I was devastated on August 5th, 1995, the day he died. But on August 9th, the day I lowered him into the ground as a friend sang "Amazing Grace" that was the day I no longer needed to live. My child was gone and no longer needed his mom. They say I wailed as the casket was lowered. I know in my mind I was in that casket with him.

A few nights later I heard Adam's voice. It awakened me from a drug induced sleep. He was calling for me out loud. I knew this whole thing was a bad dream and I would wake up. For the longest time I held that experience in my heart and told no one for fear they would just think I was nuts. After a few months of therapy I started talking about that night and wondered what it meant. As we talked Donna said, "Well, what did Adam sound like as he called out to you? Lost? Angry? In pain?" And then it came to me; he wanted to let me know that he was home and safe, just as he had always done when he came home at night.

--Patty Gene, Adam's mom, San Leandro, CA

For Friends and Family...

After I've Lost My Child Please!

A guide for those wishing to help the newly bereaved.

Don't ignore me, because you are uncomfortable with the subject of death. It makes me wonder if what happened means nothing to you.

Acknowledge my pain, and, please, don't expect me to be "over this" in a month or maybe even a year or two. Losing a child is one of the most difficult of all life's experiences, and the depth of my grief will shock even me as it returns in waves, over and over again, long after everyone else may have forgotten.

Be aware, that holidays and the time around the anniversaries of my child's birth and death may be particularly difficult and painful for me to cope with.

If you haven't been able to call for a long

time, tell me that you are sorry, and that you haven't known what to say, but don't say you've been too busy. This has been a momentous event in my life, and it hurts to hear that it has been so low on your priority lists that you couldn't even spare me a five or ten minute call.

If you invite me for a meal (and please do), in the midst of my grief expect me to talk about my loss. It's all I'm thinking about anyway, and I need to talk about it. Small talk neither interests nor helps me.

Don't change the subject, if I should start crying. Tears, and talking about my child's death are the healthiest ways for me to release this intense emotion.

Telling me that So-and-So's situation must have been harder to bear won't make mine easier. It only makes me feel that you don't understand, or can't acknowledge, the extent of my pain.

Don't expect that because my child "is in the presence of the Lord" that is all that should matter, that I should not be hurting. I may believe that and be thankful for it, but my arms ache to hold my child here. I miss the physical contact so much.

Telling me that I must be a special person for God to send me such a heavy burden, and that "Gods will is best", implies that God did this purposely. I may believe that His will is best too, but I don't believe that everything that happens (including my child's death or anyone being killed by a drunken driver for instance) is God's will.

Don't remind me that I'm so lucky to have the other children. I am, and I know it, but my pain is excruciating for this child, and having others doesn't seem to take that pain away.

No matter how bad I took, please don't say, "You look terrible." I feel like a total failure right now, so I don't need to be told that I look awful.

Remember, my child to me is a very special and unique person, who can never be replaced.

Don't say, "I know how you feel, I lost my mother." It is not the same. We all expect our parents to die one day, after they've had a full life, but I am grieving intensely for all the might-have-beens of my child's short life.

When you ask my husband how I am doing, please don't forget to ask him how he is feeling too. He has also lost a child, and if you ignore his hurt it says to him that his pain shouldn't exist, or that it doesn't matter.

Don't ignore any surviving children. Remember they are hurting very deeply but may

not be able to express their true feelings.

If I snap at you for saying any of these things please forgive me and try to understand that it comes from my intense pain.

Hug me, tell me you care, and that you are sorry this happened, even if you don't understand the depth of my pain.

Be available to me, often if you can, and let me talk and cry without judging me. Saying, "Don't cry," or, "Don't be angry," is like saying, "Don't be thirsty." My feelings are part of a normal grief response, and I will work through them more quickly and easily if you are not judgmental.

Just love me, and I will always remember you as a true friend.

--Elsie Sieben

Helpful Hint...



Goal

Goal in life?

Mine is to get through one day without crying because I think of you.

Hey, don't knock it. It's a good goal:
Manageable, attainable, measurably.

One day.

--Donna Dawkins Shea, TCF Columbia SC

Welcome...



Some People Say

I wouldn't go to one of those grief meetings. It's morbid - people sitting around talking about the dead. How wrong those people are!

In so many ways, those who attend are saying, "I am hurting now, but I want to go on with my life." They are saying, "I am crying now, but I want to laugh again." They are saying, "I am sick in body and soul; help me get well." I see these things as healthy, not morbid.

It is not easy to walk into a meeting of any kind alone, especially one where the subject is very emotional, but once there, it takes only a few minutes to find out we are not alone; that there are those who care about us and want to help us. We see others hurting and suddenly we want to help them. I don't see that as morbid.

A grieving parent wants to talk about his beloved child who is no longer physically part of

his life. That child has died with a tragic suddenness, or as a result of an illness that usually takes older people. We want to know why, or find a reason, or some meaning in our child's death. I don't see any morbidity in trying to understand.

Memories of our child are all we have left. We have a driving need to hang on to those memories lest we lose that small bit of our child. It is not morbid to want to keep that small part alive forever, at least in our hearts and minds.

To walk into a bereaved parents meeting is a loud shout - "I want to live and be happy again." It is a cry that "My child is dead, but I know he would want me to go on and be a better person for the suffering. It is a confirmation that "Even though part of my life is gone, there is a reason to go on." There is nothing morbid about doing what is necessary in order to re-enter the mainstream of life.

--Margaret Gerner, St. Louis, MO

Book in Review...



Such Good People by Martha Whitmore Hickman.

An average family, two boys and a girl, normal problems, real life people, until an accident causes the death of the daughter. But, as we all know life can hand us an over-whelming tragedy and we are no longer a "normal" family. Because this is a novel, the characters do have their unbelievable scenes, but on the whole most bereaved parents will probably find much to relate to. The author is a bereaved parent and this is her first novel.

--Reviewed by Ellen Coltman, Atlanta, GA

No Guarantee

The prognosis is made and the tears are shed.

The reality begins and the battle is everlasting.

They do what they can and offer sympathy and support.

The family ties are simultaneously strengthened and weakened, never smooth, always tense.

Laughter comes seldom, but most always remembered.

Portraits are treasured, carefully protected and cherished.

Hospitalizations and appointments

are met with, but never easy.

The voice that speaks, but never heard, is saying the same old verse -

Life isn't simple, when there's no guarantee.

--Maria C. Angelina, before she died of cystic fibrosis. Daughter of Diane McCarthy TCF, Western Adirondack Chapter

She's Not There

As my family and friends gather round to eat
And the children play games as we share,
I still feel empty and lonely at times
As I realize that she's not there.

On Saturday when I go to the mall to shop
And wander aimlessly through the stores and stare,
Nothing seems to interest me now
And I feel lost 'cause she's not there.

On Sunday in church as we worship and sing
And bow our heads in prayer,
My eyes glance over to the empty seat
And I'm reminded again, she's not there.

When I go to her grave with flowers in hand
And my sorrow is too great to bear,
The lord tells me gently, she is with Him
So I go, for I know, she's not there.

No, she's not there as far as the eye can see
Only her memory lives on in me.
But God in His mercy and wisdom and care
Will give me His Love when she's not there.
--Nancy L. Walker TCF, Lafayette, IN

We do not 'get over' a death. We learn to carry the grief and integrate the loss in our lives. In our hearts, we carry those who have died. We grieve and we love. We remember.





Our Children Remembered



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

Josue
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.

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings...**Only Surviving Siblings:
Am I an Only Child Now?**

~By Daniel Yoffee

In families with only two children, the siblings often look out for and protect each other, which makes the loss of one even more difficult for the surviving child. The brothers and/or sisters looked forward to a long and enjoyable future, never thinking that they would be separated. There was the assumption that the siblings would grow old together, reminiscing about the past. Not only are there the intense sadness and feelings of total devastation, but the surviving sibling may feel a huge sense of responsibility for the future care of the parents. While both siblings are alive, there might not be much thought about the loss of a parent, as they believe they will always be there to help each other make decisions when the time comes-that they would always go through everything together.

Another concern is that the surviving sibling won't have any family to rely on to remember the past. With the loss of a sibling, we are left an immense grief and a "new reality" that we never wanted, never asked for. The anguish and loneliness are over-whelming. Those who have no surviving siblings to share their thoughts, feelings, memories, and pain are left to deal with a wider range of issues. Bereaved parents often have a hard time with the question "How many children do you have?" Many only surviving siblings also have a hard time dealing with similar issues. They may not be up to explaining what happened. It often depends on the relationship to the person asking. The best choice is to answer whichever way is easier emotionally. Another question surviving siblings often ask themselves is "Am I an only child now?" The sibling who has died will always be their brother or sister, but they may want to spare themselves the pain of people's reactions to hearing of the death (or just the pain of having to say it, which is hard enough). It is so difficult to process the fact that this one person, who shared the past, will not be a part of their future. It's good to remember that no matter how the question is answered, we will always be an older or younger brother or sister.

SIBLINGS

Tomorrow,
 I'll try to understand her,
 Try to understand the excitement behind
 Those piercing black eyes.
 Try to understand her zeal for life,
 Tireless energy, and love for others.
 Tomorrow,
 I'll sit down beside her and get to know
 This sister of mine.
 I'll get to know the skinny little girl
 I grew up with and shared a bedroom with
 For all our teen years.
 Tomorrow,
 We'll share secrets together
 We'll go for long walks,
 We'll just sit together for hours and laugh.
 Tomorrow,
 I'll ask her about her boyfriends,
 I'll ask her about her girlfriends,
 I'll even ask what her favorite subject is in school.
 Today?
 I'm too busy,
 I have too much to do,
 She's getting on my nerves.
 Today,
 She's borrow my precious clothes, ruining them.
 Today,
 She's using up all the gas in my car.
 Today,
 She's asking stupid questions
 I just don't feel like answering.
 Today,
 I'm too tired.
 But tomorrow,
 I'll tell her how much I love her,
 I'll hug her and tell her she's pretty,
 I'll tell her I'm glad I have a sister . . . tomorrow.
 Tomorrow
 Has finally come and she is gone.
 ~written by Cindy, Kathi's sister
 Taken from a book written by Kathi's mother
 called, "18, No Time To Waste."



For Grandparents...

When Your Grandchild Has Died

There has never been a grandchild born who wasn't wonderful in the eyes of their

grandparents. Grandchildren are a special gift. They are the children of your heart, the children you get to love without having to be responsible for their bedtime or keeping their room clean. When your grandchild has died, you are confronted with the loss of your heart and, at the same time, forced to watch the pain of your son or daughter as they grieve. Your brain and your heart scream, "It's not supposed to be this way," "It hurts too much," and, "It's not fair."

Along with the loss of your grandchild, you have lost the opportunity to see your family continue through that child. The special place for that child in the family has been left empty and there is a terrible void. What are you going to do?

You will need opportunities to talk about the death and the pain. Unfortunately, grandparents may not be recognized as grievers and you will have to seek out people who will hear your story. Telling your story to others will help you work through your grief and make you more able to help your child grieve their child.

Grief is very physical. It saps your energy, affects your appetite, keeps you awake or makes you want to sleep all the time. When you are tired and hungry, every emotional event, like seeing a school bus or hearing children the age of your dead grandchild, will hit you with greater impact. Taking care of your physical self is important: drink plenty of water, eat foods that contain protein and complex carbohydrates to give you some energy. Rest for short periods during the day; get some exercise even if it is only walking for 15 to 20 minutes daily.

Grieving is a complex process of the mind, body and soul. The mind seeks information about what happened as it tries to make sense out of the senseless. The 'if only' and 'I should have' thoughts can attack at any time and send you sliding into despair as you realize there is nothing you can do to change what has happened. Blame and doubt may become constant companions. Seeking information and talking to others about your 'should have' thoughts will help you use your mind to process grief.

You may begin to question your faith and find yourself asking what life is all about. It is normal to reevaluate what has meaning for you and what your values and virtues really are.

Do not avoid your pain with overwork, overplay or try to lessen the pain with drugs or alcohol. These things will only provide temporary relief.

The pain will still be present and may be expressed as anger or despair. Use a journal, write a poem, read stories of others' grief journey, paint a picture, create a story. These are ways to confront your grief and allow yourself to move through the process.

Create rituals to help you celebrate your grandchild. Other family members may help you think of ways to commemorate this child of your heart. Establishing a scholarship, donating toys or books, building a playground or planting a tree are all ways to share your grandchild's life with others.

What about your relationship with your adult child who is grieving? Remember when you could kiss it and make it better? You cannot do that now and nothing is harder than seeing your child in pain that you cannot control. This need to cure your child's pain may tempt you to provide your child with unsolicited advice. It may also tempt you to encourage them to bury their pain or to somehow communicate to them that enough time and tears have passed.

The best gifts you can give at this time are your ears and time to listen. Listen without judgment or advice. Your ability to do this can bring a deepening of the relationship between you and your child. Remember that each person and relationship is different and your child may not wish to talk with you. If this is the case, consider that your child may be trying to protect you, so just offer to be there and accept whatever they are willing to share. Do not try to force the issue. Be willing to talk about your grandchild with your child. If the tears come, that's okay. Tears, especially, can be very healing.

Grief is the price people pay for loving someone and you never have to apologize for that. You may both find it helpful to talk with someone who also loved the child. This is a way that you can add to your memories as you begin to transform your relationship with your grandchild from one of presence to one of memory.

What about the other children? Children are often the forgotten grievers in a family. They are experiencing many of the same things you are, so share your thoughts and tears with them. Crying together can be a healing experience. You cannot protect them from the realities of grief, so keep communications open.

Make sure your other grandchildren know they are loved and included in family decisions and

rituals so they do not feel abandoned by you and the child who has died. These children need to understand their unique place in your heart and be helped to understand they do not need to try to fill the place of the child who died. They need to know they are special to you, too.

Love never ends. It lives on forever in your heart.

-- Western Australia TCF

From Our Members...



He Only Took My Hand

Last night while I was trying to sleep,
My son's voice I did hear
I opened my eyes and looked around
but he did not appear.
He said "mom you've got to listen,
You've got to understand
God didn't take me from you, Mom
He only took my hand.
When I called out in pain that night,
The instant that I died,
He reached down and took my hand,
And pulled me to his side.
He pulled me up and saved me
From the misery and pain
My body was hurt so badly inside,
I could never be the same.
My search is really over now,
I've found happiness within,
All the answers to my empty dreams
And all that might have been.
I love you and miss you so,
And I'll always be nearby.
My body's gone forever,
But my spirit will never die!
And so, you must go on now,
Live one day at a time.
Just understand –
God did not take me from you,
He only took my hand.
I see our family every day.
I play, laugh and sing a lot.
I hear you when you pray.
Please don't be mad at God you see...
He loves me, too.
Even though you not with me,
I'm really still with you...
--Author unknown
Submitted by Linda Curtis

Welcome New Members ... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, and the next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.

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

Birthday Table... In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share.

We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or whatever remembrance you choose, in memory of your child. Our child's, grandchild's, or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others. Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday month and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos.

Newsletter Birthday Tributes... During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them

by e-mail to Lynntcf@aol.com

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Aug 1st for Sept 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

survivorsof suicide.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:

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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 National Office of TCF has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register. There is also a closed group chat room for specific topics that you need to register for.

Online Support (Live Chat) TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation

among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please Note: Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to: www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support

MONDAY--

6:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
7AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings (open depending on monitor availability)
7 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

TUESDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
5 PM PST: Loss to Substance Related Causes
6 PM PST: Bereaved Less than Two Years
6 PM PST: Bereaved More than Two Years

WEDNESDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
7 AM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings
6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

THURSDAY--

5:45 PM PST: First-Time Chatter Orientation
5 PM PST: No Surviving Children
6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

FRIDAY--

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

SATURDAY--

6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

SUNDAY--

5 PM PST: Suicide Loss
6 PM PST: Parents/Grandparents/Siblings





DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



The Compassionate Friends is a totally self-supporting organization. Our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, but we do have operating costs. Your tax deductible donation is what keeps our chapter going. When making a donation, please make checks payable to The South Bay/L.A. chapter.

Mail to: The South Bay/LA chapter of Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 11171 Torrance CA 90510

In loving memory of Dominique Oliver, May 1985 - March 2002 and Brandon Armstrong, July 1995 - July 1995.

Love Mom

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

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

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____

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

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

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Many we love have passed away
all to soon - WITHOUT reason!
We REMEMBER them often
in a *million* different ways.
In the morning . . . At night.
When we gaze at the stars.
A special date . . . A song.
A place . . . A Smell.
In LOVING MEMORY of all those who
have LEFT us way to SOON all-greatquotes.com

—Return Service Requested—

August 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.