



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Oct. 2022 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be Oct. 6th, 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, Oct. 6th meeting will start with "Finding Hope While Mourning The Death Of A Child."

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.

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (310) 530-8489
j.mantyla@att.net
Leo & Connie Licciardone (310) 292-5381
Conniestar58@gmail.com

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

The **Thursday, Oct. 6th** meeting will start with the topic **“Finding Hope While Mourning The Death Of A Child.”** Hope seemed elusive if not totally gone from my life after my son died unexpectedly. “Hope; to wish for something with expectation.”

This may be the dictionary’s definition, but not mine as a newly bereaved parent. I desperately wanted to find the hope to want to live. The hope to end the pain. The hope to feel joy again. The hope for my family to function like we used to. After reading the following article “Points to Ponder” in a TCF newsletter I thought it sounded absurd that I had to *learn* how to feel positive again...But it turned out to be true. In the beginning the phrase “Fake it till you make it” became my new mantra. It was kinda like crawling before taking that first step. In retrospect, trying to think or find something positive and then write it down (when the whole idea seems stupid to me), actually does force you to think in a different manner. It was hard to find things to be thankful for, to look forward to. My thinking that “if I don’t look forward to something good, I won’t be as disappointed when it doesn’t come true” thinking, changed. I had been waiting for the next tragedy to find me for so long that I forgot how to look for anything positive. This shift in thinking changed me and allowed me to have hopeful expectations again. We welcome you to join us as we share ways to find hope in yourself and to begin to actually look forward to life again after the loss of your child.

--L.V.

Points to Ponder

How do we ever get a positive feeling back in our lives? How do we begin to see the good instead of the bad? How do we begin to look forward to tomorrow instead of hoping that it doesn’t arrive? **THE ANSWER IS:** We have to teach ourselves how to begin to be positive again, a little at a time. But how do we do that?

An easy way is to make a list each night before you go to bed. Start trying to find 5 positive things about your day. They can be small, silly things, like: (1) my car started this morning; (2) I didn’t have a flat tire; (3) the coffee pot worked; (4) I heard a bird sing; (5) I found two socks the same color. Try to add another item to the list each day. Soon, you will find that you notice things

that can be added to the list. When you come up with 25 per day, you will find your outlook on life has changed, and your life is more positive.

--Pam Duke, TCF/Dallas Chapter

What is Our Option B?

We are over the halfway mark to five years, and it gives me the chills to think about the reality of our new life. We are NOT over it, as some may think. We never will be, of course. We try to figure out how to walk through the darkness, while trying to have a productive life.

I think about this book, *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*, written by Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, after the sudden passing of her husband. I relate to what she wrote. When we are faced with tragedy, we must make some decisions that are unthinkable! How can we possibly go on? How can we get out of bed, work, talk to people, and go on with our lives? This goes for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents, and spouses. There is no discrimination when it comes to grief.

Like the author of the book, I have found that facing my grief head on, while difficult, has allowed me to go through the stages of grief and accept the unimaginable situation of becoming a bereaved mom. I thought that if people were uncomfortable talking to me about my child, I would make it a point to open the dialog.

Speaking openly about my Andrea, in a manner that is not sad. Keeping her beautiful soul alive by writing about her, laughing at the great memories we cherish as a family, and always putting love first and letting people know that it is okay to talk about her. I have consistently done this since July of 2015, and I have witnessed how engaging people can be. We have to remember that once upon a time, we were these people who did not know what to say, so it is okay to help them understand.

This process has strengthened me in a way I did not know possible. Why? Because keeping her memory alive allows me to grieve with a lot of love, a lot of tenderness. It allows me to feel her next to me.

My husband, our daughters and I all grieve differently as I have often written, but we have one



thing in common – the love and memories of Andrea and the unbreakable desire to honor her, act in a way to make her proud, and continue her legacy. We are smiling and laughing, the smiles are starting to be real and joy is starting to come back. It is different, but it exists.

I have chosen to go through this unthinkable tragedy with hope. Andrea was a very spiritual being, who always trusted the Universe. I am choosing to trust the path chosen for her and for us by the Universe. Just by thinking this way, I know she is proud of us, and THAT makes me smile and brings me joy.

She did not go in vain, and my new purpose in life is to continue her legacy, and to give hope to those who are lost, as I once was, not so long ago.

We as a family, so often hear her words of wisdom resonate in our hearts – “Trust the Universe, surround yourself with positive energy, and you will find joy, even in adversity.” Since her passing, not only I, but all of us, have been in tune with our feelings, our thoughts, and the life lessons that she taught us. Learning to cut the negativity in our lives, and control what we can control has made our grieving journey not only bearable, but it has become a way of life that we are embracing.

It is our Option B.

-- Ghislaine Thomsen

Death Takes a Back Seat

There was a time, not so long ago, when the only focus I had was on the death of my child. The loss of his life and his absence from the physical plane swept over me like a tsunami. I lived his death every waking moment.

The sorrow was devastating, and the waves of pain kept coming and coming, crashing over me, with no end in sight.

Each of us has experienced our grief in a unique way, and each of us has done what is necessary to cope. But at some point in my grief, I began perceiving my son's death as only one moment in his life. I believe that was when I began to find hope.

The shock had worn off; the tsunami of pain had subsided. I began remembering the events and everyday activities with joy instead of sorrow. I remembered his birth, his first steps, his first word, and his development as a toddler and then as a young child. I remembered his first day of school.

I remembered the anxiety I felt as he blithely slipped out of the car and walked up that big sidewalk by himself for the first time. “I love you, Mom,” he said as he grabbed his lunch box, crayons and tablet. He looked so cute and confident that day. He knew he was going to learn to read.

I remembered his trips to the barber with my dad, the fun they had together, the first ride in Grandpa's new convertible, the obvious love they shared. I remembered the day my dad cried when Todd asked him, “Grandpa, have you ever loved someone so much that you just want to be a part of them? That's how much I love you.” He was six years old, dad was the hardened WWII Marine, and dad's eyes filled with tears as the impact of this tremendous break through my son had given him touched him. Dad was always a gentler, more open man after that innocent statement of emotion by his grandson.

I remembered the many Christmas celebrations, the anticipation that filled Todd's heart each year. The holidays were very special to him. I remembered our move to Houston when Todd was just 12 years old; he got a paper route, a heavy duty Schwinn bike and he was earning

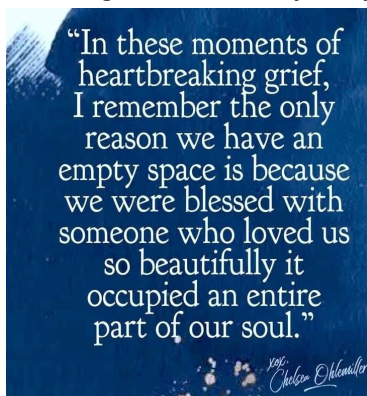
money for his first car. Every Sunday I would drive him on his paper route at about 4:00 am because the papers were too heavy for the bike. Todd would make my coffee and wake me up, and off we would go. Those were special times when it was just Todd and I talking easily about his life, his dreams and the future. I thought about Todd's high school years, his graduation, the promise of the future

and the tears in my dad's eyes as he watched the ceremony marking yet another milestone in his special grandson's life.

I remembered the birth of Todd's son, the nights we sat talking while he fed his baby, and the discussions about the best way to raise a child. I remember the day he married, the birth of each of his daughters, the deep love and devotion he had for them.

Then I recalled the day when Todd received his MBA from Texas A&M. My dad stood proudly in the aisle watching the ceremony and listening to the Aggie fight song, tears in his eyes as he looked at his grandson, grown-up and ready for life.

I remembered my son's first house-a fixer



upper. My husband and I gave him money for the down payment and he put plenty of sweat equity into it. After his daughters were born, he chose to move to a larger home, selling his first home with no small amount of sadness. For this was where his adult life started. This home had marked his first real step in responsibility and the world of the adult.

All the good times come flooding back now, the memories as vivid as the moments were in time. Yes, there is still sadness, but my heart tells me that I must celebrate the 35 years Todd had on this earth. He lived a good life, laughed, loved and worked hard. He was a lot like his grandpa in that respect.

Now when I tell a story about Todd, there is a returning joy in my heart. And now, each day when I come home from work, I remember how good it was to see him after a stressful day and to reach out and hug my child.....whether he was 3 years old or 35 years old. We have a bond, a bond I have felt everyday since his birth. The bond between mother and child does not end at death.
--Annette Mennen Baldwin In memory of my son,
Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX

Navigating The Ebb and Flow Of Grief

At almost four years after the death of my daughter, I had thought it would be easier than this. In those early days and months when my grief made it feel like I simply couldn't survive this loss, I saw others in support groups who had lost their loved ones many years before, and they seemed ok. They looked almost "normal" again. They told me it wouldn't always be like this. They said you learn to live with the pain, and it would lessen over time. They said you will eventually find joy and happiness again. They said you create a "new normal." And they were right.

I have worked hard for almost four years on working through my grief. I have faced it head on through continual counseling and support groups and still seek out ways to express my pain, so as not to hold it in and let it consume me. Along the way, I have given myself permission to smile once more, and even to allow joy to enter my heart again. I have enjoyed my other children. I have



volunteered my time with The Compassionate Friends. I have created my own grief support website. I have consciously tried to focus my energies on remembering my daughter's life rather than only looking at the pain her death has brought.

And yet grief remains a constant part of my life. Grief is fickle. Unpredictable. And indifferent to whatever mood I'm in. Most days my grief lies dormant under the activities of everyday life. Little triggers will continually remind me it's there. A sad news story on the TV. A girl at the park who reminds me of my daughter. But I can go about my regular routines with no interruptions. Other times, the triggers are bigger, and the grief bubbles up and takes over my mood. Tears well up behind my eyes, ready to release at the first opportunity. My patience seems to evaporate and everyday tasks become cumbersome, meaningless, and even difficult. Usually the bursts of grief from larger triggers only last a few hours or at most a few days. But sometimes it lingers and grows. What I didn't expect is that even coming on four years after her death, I still find myself in situations where grief becomes so overwhelming again that it feels like I've gone right back to the debilitating early

days of grief. Feelings of sadness, pain, lethargy, disinterest in things I normally enjoy. Going to work becomes a struggle. Even taking care of my kids feels like a burden. I know these periods require extra attention and care, and I navigate through the best I can, asking for support along the way. I just wonder if these episodes will ease over time, or if I should just expect them to become a permanent fixture of my "new normal" life? If the death of my daughter has taught me anything – and it has taught me A LOT– it has taught me that we have more inner strength than we can ever imagine, and that with time, attention, and support, we can navigate through just about anything life might throw at us.
--Maria Kubitz TCF Contra Costa County, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta

Fall

It is so hard to believe that summer is over! Even though summer is technically still here until September, the cool evenings we have been having, school starting, and football games being

played are all signs that fall is here. And I love it!

To me, fall is the most invigorating time of the year. The crispness of the air, the beautiful coloration of the trees, the smell of leaf and wood smoke, the sky full of birds traveling south “talking” with one another as they go, are all part of this wonderful world we live in. I hope all of you will be able to feel and see the wonders of fall.

Sometimes we are so “down” and preoccupied with our child’s death, and we are working so hard to just get through each day, that we are unable to appreciate what is going on in the world around us.

Try to take a few minutes each day and look around. If you can focus on a beautiful tree or leaf, smell the chrysanthemums blooming in the garden or bite into a fresh apple just picked and enjoy doing this for just a few minutes, it will make your day seem brighter. And, if you are up to it, go to a high school football game or a band competition. The enthusiasm of the young people participating in these events is contagious.

Yes, it sometimes hurts. We want our children to be there also, enjoying these activities. But it also gives us renewed faith that life does go on, and there is happiness and excitement in the world. I hope you all can find some beauty and peace in the fall months ahead.

--Peggy Hartzell TCF Ambler, PA

Grief Gifts

Casseroles and cards and gifts arrive in abundance in early grief. I remember opening a small box to find a wind chime of shells strung under a circle of wood. I was still dumbstruck in grief and wondered why anyone would think that shells could ever help me? I hung the wind chime in the front porch. Years later, I still look at it, still touch it.

After the harshest waves of grief subside, there comes the moment to reconcile the gift of our child’s life against the backdrop of deep grief. My child is a gift to me to this day. My love for him remains. His love for me remains. Those are the gifts that Compassionate Friends assured me would be there along the grief journey. They were right.

This is the hope seasoned grievers give new members who have found their way to our circle of friends. They see us healed, or certainly, in better shape than they are. We see their first moments of healing. Grief gifts shared, one to another. Pass it

on.

--Monica Colberg, TCF Minneapolis, MN



Halloween—A New Way of Seeing

It’s nearly Halloween, this year my view has been affected by what I’ve seen.

The images of graves don’t perturb me, as I find peace at

yours on bended knee. Skeletons don’t scare me, your death is the only thing that has disturbed me. Bats are not a worry as I gaze at the night sky looking for you, birds fly in a flurry.

Witches and ghosts hold no harm, as you are now my Angel protecting me with loving arms.

I don’t see a cobweb and scream, I see it more as a catcher for our dreams.

Trick or Treat, well I’ve faced the trick, I will have the treat when you again I’ll meet.

This Halloween I’ll eat a piece of pumpkin pie and look for you my love in the sky.

--Marie Ste from BP/USA, Coeur d’Alene, ID

Another Halloween

Sips of cider, pungent with brown sticks of cinnamon, foretell the swift approach of fall. Another autumn, when the winds of change return the memories of Halloweens long past—devils, bunnies, pirates, gypsies, cowboys, too, and astronauts and bums and clowns—I made the costumes each fall for my two sons and also for my daughter. My daughter had not yet outgrown her love of Halloween the fall before she died. Though she was 25, she claimed the season as her own to execute a harmless prank on me, her mother—oh, maybe not for me alone, but rather planned to share the fun with all her friends.

Well—she became a nun. Her habit, black and white, was quite authentic. Her face was scrubbed and saintly free of rouge or gloss. Instead of oxfords, on her feet she wore a pair of disco-demiboots. Unlikely, yes—but black! She kept her normal stride (quite brisk and long) while walking through the hallowed halls of my office after class. She entered; but I, completely unaware of who she was, said, “May I help you?” Only when she laughed did I look again and recognize her cherub face. Then I laughed too, and laughing,

told the story several times to others. One colleague laughed and added later, "Yes, I saw her too, and said to my companion, "Can you believe the shoes that nun is wearing?" And so I'll bet that she'll be up to her old tricks again this Halloween. And I'll be listening. The roar of heavenly laughter makes for wonderful imagining.

--Shirley Ottman, TCF North Texas, Denton, TX

What They Don't Tell You...

Inspired by TCF Sibs and TCF family members who lost a loved one to suicide.

They don't tell you that there aren't five stages of grief, but an infinite amount that you revisit on a minute-by-minute basis, and then go back.

They don't tell you about all the group chats. They don't tell you that you will relive the night you found your daughter's lifeless body every single day.

They don't tell you that your schedule changes to hear your brother's truck pull in the driveway.

Or that explaining death to a four-year-old without scaring him is nearly impossible.

They don't tell you that the greatest reminders that you are living in grief happen when you're driving, or making dinner.

They don't tell you that everyone is afraid to say your loved one's name, or share memories, or pictures.

They don't tell you that your blood boils when people joke about suicide.

They don't tell you it will take months for the physical symptoms of grief to subside.

Or that your mother quite literally loses it when she can't get a hold of you.

They don't tell you that your new joys also bring the worst pain.

They don't tell you about all the ridiculous assumptions made.

They don't tell you that you will begin to question and even doubt everything that you once believed in.

They don't tell you that people will roll their eyes when you mention him because they are tired of reminders and want you to "move on."

Or that family and friends will step into the shadows and not know how to support you when you need it most.

They don't tell you that when you see his name carved in stone it's that 1st day without him all over again.

They don't tell you that a part of you dies inside because you will never take another picture of them.

They don't tell you that you will only remember things in the time frame of before they died and after they died.

They don't tell you that you will struggle every single day to survive.

Or that you will never be the person you were before and you have to learn to be a different version of yourself.

They don't tell you that even the littlest things can break you and bring you to tears.

They don't tell you that you will flinch every time someone says, "hang in there."

They don't tell you you'll feel guilty when you laugh.

They don't tell you that your grief would become stronger and deeper as time would pass.

Or that you will never be able to open a random door again.

They don't tell you that you're going to scream at the top of your lungs "I WANT HIM BACK!" .

-- Tiana Schwandt, TCF Sibling Group, *My Dear Valentine*
Minneapolis, MN

To Those Who Don't Understand Me

You think you know me?

Think again.



I know you think it's morbid

that I have pictures of my stillborn daughter.

I know you think I'm crazy for hugging and holding a blanket to my chest.

I know you think I'm weird for not washing the cap she wore with the tiny streaks of dried blood upon it, and for putting it against my face to smell.

I know you think I'm sick for dressing her and holding a funeral for her.

Now please let me tell you how I felt, and just maybe, you'll understand.

The pictures are all I have to look at since she is not here for me to see.

The blanket is the only thing I have to hug and hold since she is not here for me to hold and cuddle.

The cap has her scent and it was the only article of clothing that ever touched her skin,

to wash it would be to take away her scent.

I had her dressed because she was a human being just like you and me at birth.

I know I wouldn't want to be buried naked and so why should she?

I had a funeral for her because she was very much alive for nine months within me and I felt her life. She deserved to be acknowledged as a human being that departed from this world. She deserved this last farewell. So, you see, I did all of these things to acknowledge her existence. If I didn't do these things it would be like saying she never existed and nine months of my life never existed.

It really doesn't matter what you think, it's what I think that matters because I'm the one that lost my daughter and I think that everything I did, and everything I do, is quite normal.

I do what comforts me and gets me through this loss!

These things I did or do now from time to time to feel good, it feels right to me and that is what's important.

--Shelley Beck TCF, Anne Arundel MD



realize is that we will never be the same people we were before our child died. One of our tasks as we make our grief journey is to redefine who we are in this new reality that we did not choose.

Grief is not a predictable journey and sometimes feels as though we are on a roller coaster. One day we may feel somewhat stronger and feel we are making progress, the next day we may crash and burn. Grief is sometimes like winding a ball of yarn – you wind and wind on

it and sometimes drop it and it unravels before you – then it is time to start winding it up again. Grief can be like that. It is unrealistic to think that things will be “normal” again because they won't be the “normal” we have always known. It will be part

of our job to define our “new normal” – an existence without that child's physical presence.

It is important to remember that as we grieve, we must also mourn the death of our child. The two words are usually used interchangeably, but they mean different things. Grief is on the inside – what we are feeling inside. Mourning is “grief gone public” – in other words how we are allowed to express our grief outside of ourselves.

We have a great need to tell and retell our story far longer than many people are willing to listen to us. We need to find safe places to tell our story and continue to talk about our child. This is probably one of the greatest values of a TCF Chapter. Being part of a TCF Chapter also helps to validate what we are feeling and helps to make us feel less alone.

Pain is part of the grief process and cannot be ignored or “gotten around” if we are to heal. You must integrate and process the pain to get to the other side of it – to the place where healing can start taking place. There is a Buddhist saying... “In order to heal, you have to lean into the pain.” While grief and pain are inevitable in most people's lives, misery is optional. I am sure you have heard the expression “we cannot change the wind, only the direction of our sails.”

Remember that letting go of the pain does not mean letting go of the love you had for your child. That love will remain with you always. I think at some point each of us must make a conscious decision to heal. We must decide whether or not we want to become bitter or better. I believe each of us has the tools within us to heal, but we must listen to our inner voice to tell us how to proceed.

Newly Bereaved...

The Things I Have Learned About Grief Since the Death of My Child

Grief is not an event, it is a process. It does not have a distinct finish line. It takes each person a different amount of time to do their grief work – each person's journey is as unique as their fingerprints.

Grief is unique for each person because of the relationship they had with the child who has died. That relationship was also unique. It is different for a father, different for a mother, different for a surviving sibling. Your grief journey will be guided by many things besides the relationship you had with the child who died.

It will be influenced by your past life experiences (including previous losses); your religious beliefs, your socio-economic status, your physical health, the availability of a support network, and, in many cases, the cause of the death itself.

People want you to be “over it” way sooner than you can ever imagine that as a remote possibility. They don't seem to understand that this is not the flu and we don't get “over it”, we learn to integrate it into the fabric of our lives. People want us to be back to our “old selves again” but what they don't

Everyone seems to have an explanation for why this happened to you. It is a characteristic of our society that we want to be problem solvers, so people often feel they have to provide us with some kind of explanation. I haven't met a bereaved parent yet who felt there was a reasonable and acceptable explanation for why their child had to die.

I also think we need to be selfish as we grieve. By this I mean we must be good to ourselves, be patient with ourselves, look to what we need to do to move forward. Sometimes we get so busy caring for and nurturing others, we neglect to nurture ourselves. Remember, the word grief means "to carry a heavy burden".

We need to be open to the help others can provide. This is not a journey we need to make alone. Let people help you. Ask for help when you need it. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but an acknowledgment that you want to heal.
--Susan Chan, Rachael's Mom, TCF Topeka, KS

Seasoned Grievers...

A New Perspective

February 18, 2011 will be forever in my memory as the worst day of my life. It is the day our daughter Elsey died quite suddenly and unexpectedly.

Some people said we should be glad that we had 11 years with her since she had been born with congenital heart defects. I am sure there are some people today who think that we should be "over it" by now. Those of us who have lost a child know that we will never "get over it".

This journey we are on has a feeling of a "double edge sword". Yes, the grief has softened quite a bit in 8 years. A day never passes where I don't think of Elsey or miss her. Initially the pain was beyond anything I could have imagined when Elsey died. I felt lost and without direction for many months. I didn't know about the shock that follows a child's death.

I find now that many memories of Elsey have become fuzzy with the passing of time. I wish I filled the pages of the book a friend gave me to write those memories into. Not unlike those baby books that are given to a new parent to record all the wonderful things the baby does. We get busy with life (because it does go on) and forget the details of the ordinary moments we had with our

child.

What would I tell my newly bereaved self from this perspective of 8 years? Elsey will always be my daughter. She will be a part of every day of my life. Grief is an expression of love. Accept help from those who care (I had no idea that I wouldn't want to cook for months). Be good to yourself. People really do mean well despite all the stupid things they say. There is no right or wrong time to do many tasks after a death, such as cleaning out their closet. Grief is a life long journey that will soften with time. It is okay to talk about Elsey even though she has died. Write down memories as they come to you. Talk with your other children about their feelings even though you are in terrible pain. Today I am very thankful that Elsey lived in our family. Someday I know that we will be reunited. I know that it was all worth the chance to love you, Elsey.

--Mary Jo Peterson, Elsey's mom
TCF Minneapolis, MN

For Friends & Family...

What Grieving People Want You to Know



- I am not strong. I'm just numb. When you tell me I am strong, I feel that you don't see me.
- I will not recover. This is not a cold or the flu. I'm not sick.
- I'm grieving and that's different. I will not always be grieving as intensely, but will never forget my loved one and rather than recover, I want to incorporate his life and love into the rest of my life.
- That person is part of me and always will be, and sometimes I will remember him with joy and other times with tears. Both are, okay.
- I don't have to accept the death. Yes, I have to understand that it has happened and it is real, but there are just some things in life that are not acceptable.
- Please don't avoid me. You can't catch my grief. My world is painful, and when you are too afraid to call me or visit or say anything, you isolate me at a time when I most need to be cared about. If you don't know what to say, just come over, give me a hug or touch my arm, and gently say, "I'm sorry." You can even say, "I just don't know what to say, but I care, and want you to know that."
- Please don't say "If you need anything, call me."

I'll never call you because I have no idea what I need. Trying to figure out what you could do for me takes more energy than I have. So, in advance, let me give you some ideas:

- * Bring food.
 - * Offer to take my children to a movie or game so that I have some moments to myself.
 - * Send me a card on special holidays, birthdays (mine, his or hers), or the anniversary of the death, and be sure to mention her name. You can't make me cry. The tears are here and I will love you for giving me the opportunity to shed them because someone cared enough about me to reach out on this difficult day.
 - * Ask me more than once to join you at a movie or lunch or dinner. I may say no at first or even for a while, but please don't give up on me because somewhere down the line, I may be ready, and if you've given up, then I really will be alone.
- Virginia A. Simpson, news@beyondindigo.com

Helpful Hint...



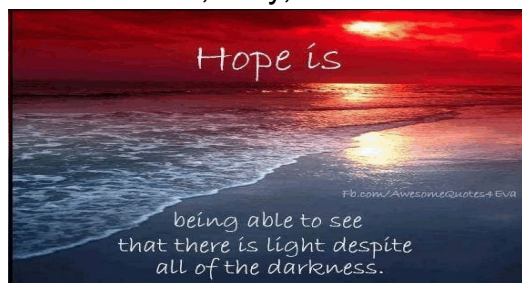
Self Help

For many of us, the monthly meeting of our Compassionate Friends Group is the only real healing time we give to ourselves. Helping ourselves on a daily basis is critical to our journey in the grieving process.

Many of us find solace in books. Others find it in movies, music, time with friends, meditation or intense spiritual conviction. Each day we should take some time to center ourselves, to find a place of peace.

If you haven't already done so, start with a quiet time of reflection and search your soul for the key to your own solace. There will still be bad, even terrible, days. The effort to help ourselves begins with knowing ourselves and finding the unique activity that soothes our broken hearts for just a little while.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin In memory of my son,
Todd Mennen TCF, Katy, TX



Welcome...

A Father's View of The Compassionate Friends: Courage, Surprise, and Understanding



Attendance Requirement: Courage. I don't think I am unique. I did not want to attend a meeting of Compassionate Friends. I was coerced by my wife. It was subtle but effective. My son, on the other hand, made a devil's deal; he agreed to go to the next meeting in exchange for a favor—his debt some weeks away. The thought of discussing death nauseates me. We, my son and I, had made a bad deal.

The Meeting: A Surprise. I was surprised to find I was not the only man to have lost a child. There was a reality to that recognition. My loss, not unlike yours, is a personal matter. No one can tell me how I feel or how I ought to feel. Yet, the group never made me feel guilty about my selfishness; they understood.

The Result: An Understanding. Compassionate Friends is not an efficient organization. There are no systems, no quick easy cures. Grief is a catharsis. Some of what you hear here you will dismiss; it will not apply to you. But, there are nuggets—small ideas you will want to try or things you will want to think about. Some you will try. Many you will discard. Only a few will help the pain. These, you will treasure.

Your friends and associates may try to understand your grief and try to help. They can do neither. They don't understand. The people at the meetings do understand. And they try to help. My son felt he had gained little from the meeting. Yet, he left feeling he had helped someone else deal with his grief. What a marvelous satisfaction for a 15-year-old.

What's in it for you? Compassionate Friends is here to help—to listen, to suggest, to understand. If you handle your grief well, you do not need Compassionate Friends. But we need you. Your approach or method of dealing with grief could help one or more of us. Please come share it.

--Bob Watts TCF Stamford, CT

Book in Review...

Losing Your Baby in Pregnancy or the First Year, by H. Lothrop This special book speaks to those who have lost a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal death, SIDS and termination of pregnancy. The voices of other parents who have suffered the devastation of their baby's death are heard throughout this warm and insightful book.

I Didn't Know (To Kara)

I didn't know – you had to go
that fateful night three years ago.
I didn't know – there was no sign
Was it part of some grand design?
I didn't know – it was so abrupt.
You would go to sleep and not wake up.
I didn't know – who would believe?
Something caused your brain to seize,
and we'd be left to mourn and grieve.
I didn't know when we said goodnight
without my Kara's love and light
that life would never again be right.
I didn't know – how could it be thus?
That you're no longer here with us.
But I do know – (when I am quiet and calm)
you are still my child, I am still your Mom.
I do know – sometimes it seems so clear,
your spirit surrounds us, you're somehow near.
I do know – it is not inane
to believe we'll unite on some other plane.
I do know – what makes sense to do
is to follow examples left by you.
To be tolerant, loving, peaceful and giving.
To donate, care deeply, somehow, go on living.
So with pride and with love, overwhelming my heart
I am grateful to you.
You have made your mark.
--Louise Karayean Williams, TCF Smith Point
Chapter, Mastic NY



It holds us all life long.
Our children now inside us –
our souls tattooed with gold,
their love, their words, caresses,
are hugs that we still hold.
If we're open to the knowledge,
that they aren't completely gone,
we will sometimes feel their touching,
sometimes soft and sometimes strong.
When they show us nature's rainbows,
we can feel their proud delight,
sending signs to show they're living,
only far beyond our sight.
-- Genesse Gentry, from "Stars in the Deepest Night"

But For Now

I once again find myself sitting in darkness.
There is no reason to have lights on.
Children will be coming to my front door
But for now, they'll think I'm gone.
It's time for the Halloween season to begin.
Children dressed in costumes and attire.
I want to see their smiles and hear the laughter...
Oh, but for now, it still sets my heart afire.
I haven't always been the way I am tonight.
I once had a child that did the same.
I would decorate the house and yard with goblins.
Oh my child loved to share the game.
Then, one day my child went away to Heaven;
Oh, I was left in pain wondering why.
I pray everyday to somehow find my way.
But for now, I do nothing but sit and cry.
Then, I will have to face other holidays.
Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year.
Only a Mom who has walked this pathway truly
understands this dreadful fear.
For I once cooked a full course meal.
I could have fed an army here.
Smells of the holiday season filled the air.
And, family came from everywhere.
Then, there was the Christmas Season.
Oh the days were filled with fun.
I once enjoyed the days shopping for gifts.
But for now, I just want to run.
I want to be happy for others at this time
But I have yet to learn the plan.
I truly want to share the holiday season..
But for now, I don't think I can...
And I know you understand.
--Kaye Des' Ormeaux
Dedicated to each Mom who has lost a child.

Nature's Rainbows

We held them in our parent arms
for days or weeks or years.
Now we hold them in our hearts
and cry the darkest tears.
The cord attached to children,
eternally fine and strong.
We never leave the missing;



Our Children Remembered



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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bettina Mia Embry
Born: 8/65 Died: 4/22
Parents: Larry & Elena Bruns

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

Miles Andrew Gallas
Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21
Mother: Denise Gallas

Mark Scott Galper
Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97
Mother: Sheri Waldstein

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

Lexie Rose Gilpin
Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09
Mother: Michele Gilpin



Our Children Remembered



Steven Paul Giuliano
Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95
Mother: Eleanor Giuliano

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kevin Le Nguyen
Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14
Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen

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

Gaby Lindeman
Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12
Parents: Gilberto & Graciela
Rodriguez

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

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

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

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

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

Alex J. Mantyla
Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08
Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie
Mantyla

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

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

Matthew "Matty" Louis Matich
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley Matich
Grandmother: Dorothy Matich

Max McCardy
Born: 4/05 Died: 8/15
Parents: Derk & Akemi
McCardy

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

Sarah Mc Donald
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17
Parents: Tom & Shideh
Mc Donald

John Paul Mc Nicholas
Born: 12/89 Died: 11/20
Parents: John & Leeann
Mc Nicholas

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

Jeremy Stewert Mead
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14
Mother: Carol Mead

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nicholas Sinclair
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22
Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jamie Taus
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21
Sister: Jackie Taus
Mother: Susan Taus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

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

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

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...



Grief's Array of Emotions

I think the most frustrating thing about grief is that it is more than just sadness or the persistent feeling of emptiness I feel. Grief spans a wide array of feelings and emotions including, but not limited to sorrow, anger, jealousy, and helplessness. Lately, I have been struggling with coming to grips with my life as it continues along a path I would never have imagined. If Carl were still alive, I imagine he would be married and I would be an aunt to his children. He would have been there for my wedding and would be anxiously awaiting, along with my parents, the arrival of his future nieces and nephews. He would have been a great uncle. He was always great with kids and reveled in the part of himself which never grew up; the same trait which inexplicably drew kids to him.

Losing a brother is not just losing a companion, a best friend, a confidant, someone to pave the way for a little sister as she follows eagerly behind. When Carl died I not only lost those things, but I lost the future we would have had. I wish I would have had a chance to see how great he would have been with the children I hope to someday have. I wish I would have had the chance to see his sparkle, his amazing smile passed on to his children.

But my reality is that these things will never come to pass. As each year turns into the next I struggle to reconcile the life I had imagined with the life I live today. It's hard to keep moving forward when I no longer have a big brother to do things first so I know, more or less, what to expect.

Maybe dealing with Carl's death and the loss of the future I had imagined would be easier if grief were merely a matter of dealing with the ensuing sadness. However, as my life continues to move

forward I come across new struggles.

I find myself getting jealous of my husband of three months, relationship with his brother and angry at him for having one when mine is gone. Is it rational? No, but grief isn't always rational. I can't fault him for having a close relationship with his brother, nor can I fault him for Carl's death. I have no real reason to be angry with him when he is on the phone with his brother. I can't be angry with him because it's not me. No matter how much I wish, it will never be me again. I have no real reason to be jealous of his niece and nephew and the relationship he has with them. It is not his fault that I will never hold my brother's children.

It isn't fair for me to take my anger out on him or brood silently while he continues to nurture relationships with his family. I know, too well, the importance of family. One of the things I love most about him is that he is very close to his family and places great importance on maintaining strong familial ties. But, my grief inevitably creeps in and weaves its way through our relationship.

Not only do I have to deal with my grief, but I have to be careful in how I channel it, if I want to have a successful marriage. Yet, even as I try to channel my grief, more anger creeps in because I have to concentrate harder on my actions because I am grieving my brother's death...and that doesn't feel very fair either.

I try to tell my husband and try to help him understand when I am feeling angry or jealous because he has something I long to have, but I am afraid. I fear that there will come a day when I tell him the reason I am acting irrationally is because I am struggling with my grief and he sees my explanation merely as an excuse or something I should learn to control. I fear he will tire of being patient with me, or expect that one day I won't cry "over nothing" or that one day I won't feel sad on the Fourth of July because it was one of Carl's favorite holidays.

Is my fear irrational, or am I assuming he will react to me the way others in the past have reacted? I guess I am bound to find out sooner or later. Just as I learn to live with my grief I will have to learn how to manage my grief while maintaining a marriage. I sure wish grief was just about feeling sad. No, I really wish I didn't have to deal with it all.

--Carrie Kears In Memory of my brother, Carl

You Will Never Know

You will never know
 How much I loved being your big sister,
 How much I loved looking out for you.
 You will never know
 How I would lie in bed late at night,
 And wait until you were home.
 You will never know
 How I would pretend to be asleep,
 As I heard you say goodnight to Fudge
 And quietly pass by my door.
 You will never know
 How on that last night you left the house
 I waited wide awake listening for your familiar
 sound
 But that sound never happened and you never
 passed by my door.
 The house is so quiet now and the only sound is
 from myself—crying.
 Because you will never know how much I miss
 being your big sister.
 --Elizabeth Cannon, TCF N. Reading, MA

For Grandparents...



A Grandparent's Lament

My seven-year-old grandchild was killed in a tragic accident. We had such wonderful times together. He was the shining light of my life and now he is gone. I feel sorry for my daughter and son-in-law, but they have lots of support from caring friends. No one seems to understand my agony. Grandparents mourn too!

How true. The grandparent-grandchild relationship is very special. With quality time they provide the biggest laps, make few demands, and give many gifts. It has often been said that parents aren't supposed to bury their children. But neither are grandparents supposed to bury their grandchildren.

When a child dies, both parents and grandparents have lost a part of their future—one of the most horrific blows that human beings can endure. There is a double assault of grieving for a grandchild while witnessing the suffering of your daughter and son-in-law. Your grief work may be different. Memories and attachments are not the same. Each of you has been rocked in individual paths to the very depths of your being

in the attempt to patch together pieces of your shattered lives. You must find a way to express what you are feeling or this suffering will stay inside you and fester. Seek out those with whom you can share your heartbreak. Pour out these emotions of grief and if necessary, repeat them time and again. Perhaps keep a journal for your eyes alone to flood out your sorrow. But most of all, talk. Talk to your friends, family, neighbors, clergy, support group or a professional counselor. How sorely you need their expressions of help, warmth, and understanding.

The death of your grandchild may also result in an even closer relationship with your daughter, son-in-law, and the rest of your family. Recall the unforgettable memories of the past as you search for a meaningful future. Even in your overwhelming despair you will realize that part of that child's life will live with you forever.

--Rabbi Earl A. Grollman

From "Journeys," a Newsletter of the Hospice

From Our Members...



"Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work—you don't give up."

--Anne Lamott

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: Nov. 1st for Dec. 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 our 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 money 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
 healingafterloss.org
 survivorsofsuicide.com
 taps.org (military death)
 save.org (suicide/depression)
 pomc.com (families of murder victims)
 grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)
 www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)
 Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

opentohope.com
 webhealing.com
 alivealone.org
 angelmoms.com

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

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



STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik	Lori Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
Connie & Leo Licciardone	Kitty Edler
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	Susan Kass
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla	

National Office Information:

Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter: TCF National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. We encourage everyone use the valuable information it holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at <http://compassionatefriends.org> and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

The 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 Jillian Nicole Katnic March 1987 to October 2018. It has been four years since you left us. We miss you more than ever.

Love, Mom

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 _____

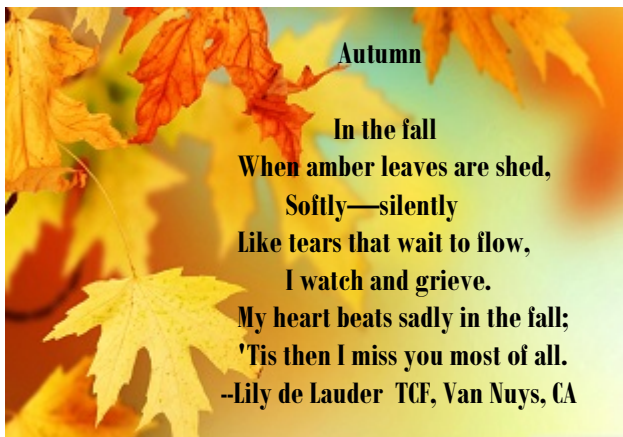
Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____

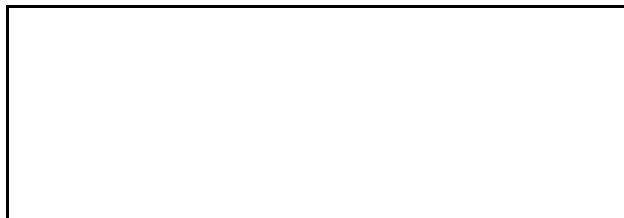
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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