



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Feb. 2023 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be Feb 2nd, the first ***Thursday***  
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

#### **LOCATION:**

**The Neighborhood Church**  
**415 Paseo Del Mar**  
**Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274**  
**(South of Torrance Beach)**

**DIRECTIONS:** Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

**--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--**

#### **The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...**

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The Thursday, Feb 2nd meeting will start with " Love, Grief, and Hope."

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com) for the link.

The TCF Sharing group takes place at Hoff's Hut's outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237<sup>th</sup> 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.

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The **Thursday, Feb 2nd meeting will start with “Love, Grief, and Hope.”** February is often thought of as the month of love. Valentine’s day holds many emotions and memories. From the home made cards and sentiments expressed with hugs and smiles, memories come flooding back. Love and Hope are both a part of our healing. With the loss of a child, to some degree we need to merge this past love with our present day conditions. We need to channel the love and time that we shared with our child in directions that will bring some peace, comfort, and healing. Take time out to be good to yourself, to remember your child, to do something to share the love that still remains in your life. The month of February is a good time to reach out and remind those special people in your life how fortunate you are to have them and how much they mean to you. We invite you to come share the different ways love is helping you cope with the loss of your precious child.

### **This Month of February, I Wish You Love**



This is the month that a whole day is dedicated to love. In our sorrow, let us not forget that LOVE is the one emotion which, above all else, can comfort and console us. Let us think of the things we love:

1. Our child—whom we loved—still love—and always will love—here in our hearts as long as we live.
  2. Our families—hurting like us—lonely —needing each other—needing us.
  3. Our true friends—listening—trying to help—wanting to lighten our load, but not knowing how—not always understanding, but there.
  4. Our memories—of wonderful times gone by—some that make us laugh—some that make us cry—but all part of the fabric of our lives and of our love for each other.
  5. Our quiet times—to get away by ourselves and think—to read—to note again the world around us—to let peace enter.
  6. Our Compassionate Friends—who are there—who know—who understand when others do not.
- “Love makes the world go round” and when our world comes to a sudden, grinding, heart-shattering stop, love is the glue that keeps us from falling off.
- Fran MacArthur, TCF Southern MD

### **Finding Meaning In Our Grief**

After the death of a child, when we are in the depths of grief, it is hard to believe we will ever be happy again. We are overwhelmed by what used to be the simplest of tasks, yet we still have to function. Life continues on never missing a beat. There is no magic wand and there are no magical words for surviving grief. As we each find our own way, we must be patient and gentle with ourselves.

Grief can focus us inward. It is only when we start to look outside of ourselves that the healing can begin. In trying to accept my daughter Kristen's death, I realized loving always brings the potential for suffering. But what other choice is there? Not to love or to have someone to love is to me a greater suffering. We must not allow the love we have for our deceased child to keep us from the love we have for our spouse, surviving children, and other loved ones. We must instead, allow our love for them to carry us forward. Through them we can begin a new life.

In order to cope with suffering, which is a natural part of life, we each need to search out that which is personally meaningful. This is the greatest challenge after our child has died, but until we do, we will not be free from the pain. What helped me after Kristen's death was connecting with other bereaved parents. I didn't care what their degrees were. I knew that they knew what I was going through and seeing how they rebuilt their lives gave me hope to do the same. This is another reason why The Compassionate Friends, Parents of Murdered Children, Survivors of Suicide, Help After Neonatal Death (HAND), and Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) organizations help on an ongoing basis. We can all learn from and be there for each other as we repair our shattered dreams.

May our beloved children who died much too soon never be forgotten.

--Carol Kearns, author of *Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare: How My Daughter's Death Has Taught Me the Meaning of Life.*

### **Love Has Found a Home Perhaps ...**

Love has found a home and it rests with us. Most of the time we can answer the who, when, how, what and where in regards to our child and their death. The “who” is your child and their name, age, gender and the unique qualities that make

them so very special. The “who” is the splendid soul that is there while we are here.

The “how, what, when and where” is found in the particulars of the circumstances that have seized your child. Whether their life ends by illness or accident, suicide, murder or miscarriage, or any other manner the circumstances are not identical but they are the same separation. They are the unique fingerprints of finality. All of us have fingerprints none of us have the same ones. Bereaved parents own the saddest of realities for now and forever. Separation and finality team up to devour your life and make you cry in the oddest of places, at the strangest of times. You know why even if the world is mystified.

At first it is impossible to have thoughts of death and our child together in any conceivable fashion. It makes no sense to the new Moms and Dads who have been drafted into the army of the bereaved parent. It makes no sense to veterans. Perhaps angry or questioning logic fades as love takes hold and lights our world. Would it be better to not hurt at all but not have had a child? There are some parents in this world that do not suffer since their son or daughter died because they only know of the word love and not its meaning, form without substance. You hurt so much because you love so much. You are crazy with grief because you are crazy with love. The determined desire to go beyond simple survival, to travel beyond death's details, holds great power over death and depression. The bad news is, it isn't easy. The good news is, it can, and has been done.

It is the “why” that remains elusive. The “why” that escapes practical evaluation resulting in concrete conclusions. The “why” that is sought for answers. The “why” that is often concealed in confusion that pretends to hide a nonexistent solution. What answer? How can there be an answer to why Him? Her? Me? Us?

Normal thinking does not work. The way we use to do things does not work. Logic has been stripped from our evaluation process. We are lost since there are no answers to “why” this happened. “It” happens to others. Why have we lost our immunity? Is it our fault? Could we have taken some other course of action? Inaction? Should we have made different plans? Thoughts float in and out of our mind taunting our souls with unanswerable questions.

At some fork in the grief trail we travel we can let go of the “why” issue. There is no drum roll to

announce the arrival of Hope. Nor are there triumphant trumpets signaling the departure of the tortuous unanswerable “why”. The saddest and most frustrating of questions is allowed to disintegrate and be replaced by a fuzzy, vague presence of Hope. Our awareness ability has detected its presence. One morning you wake and a whole minute goes by before you remember.

Hope is not the shallow, cheery optimism that the bereaved wear for worldly consumption. It is the deepest and most glorious of productive inspirations that the Hope of eternity and reunion can bring. It is the Hope that all is not lost. It isn't easy to see through curtains of tears so often pulled tightly shut by overwhelming sadness.

Hope can open those eyes to observe the scene where love exposes finality as an illusion. Hope and love can make eternal death disappear. There will still be hurt, it will still be intense, it will not fill every waking moment as time changes from enemy to ally. Our love for the child that is not here the way we want will always be with us and eventually replace all else. Our children fill our lives through others that are still here. They do it every day. We just have to keep looking for the place that love calls home.

--Pat O'Donnell Reprinted from TCF  
Johannesburg Newsletter



### **Grief Is a Constant Companion For The Mother Who's Lost a Child**

I'm sorry for your loss. Loss is something that is never easy, but especially excruciating when it was the life you created, carried, birthed, and held. It is so important to remember your child, but also important to remember you.

Grief is one of the most uncomfortable topics in the world. When you grieve, you often struggle to capture the wide range of emotions felt day-to-day, or you struggle to grasp what kind of support you need when asked. But for others watching you grieve, it's awkward and sometimes silent. People say the words “take as long as you need” and yet they expect you to come back to work in a week or at least get out of bed. There's this unspoken expectation that eventually you will stop talking about it or it won't be at the forefront of your daily life anymore. But the truth is, you have gone through a great loss, one like no other. Although that grief will look different over time, it IS a part of

you.

I say this because it is OK to feel it. It's OK to take as long as you need, because you will need forever. It's OK to feel the range of emotions, to talk about it, to cry, to not be OK sometimes. The norm SHOULD be that we expect each other to grieve for a lifetime, and that we unconditionally accept that your loss will shape you in a different way forever. While grief may take a lifetime, healing allows your pain to feel like that boulder on your chest each and every day is a little lighter. It is anger and acceptance, pain and comfort. But healing is possible. Your journey in this matters. You matter. The child you lost matters.

As you and your family adjust to a new normal, the idea that things are different and you might not always be able to put your finger on what's best for you at each moment, it is important to surround yourself with others who allow you to grieve in your own time and your own way. Phrases like, "Yeah I know that was tough but . . ." or, "Well it's been so long isn't it time to move on? Or try again?" are damaging and can be toxic.

Generally, people mean well. But because our society still treats grief as an awkward pause in life, it is vital to set boundaries. In your grief, use your voice. It's OK to tell others in your life that what they said was hurtful or that it wasn't what you needed. It's OK to set boundaries with others that you may not want in your life anymore but they might still exist in your space such as work, church, or family. It's OK to give yourself the power to remember that your grieving process is yours and no one else's. Don't compare. The woman who spoke at your support group who lost her child last year might have seemed to "get through it" faster, but that comparison minimizes what you need. Comparison is the thief of joy, and to compare your grief is to prevent future possibilities of joy as you heal.

It's important to remember that you can reach out to those who have embraced your grief with you. Creating networks of friends and family for you as an individual and you as a family is crucial to healing. Allowing yourself to ask for what you need—maybe a meal, maybe time alone, maybe a friend for comfort and company—gives you the new ability to get in tune with your feelings and needs daily in order to take care of yourself.

Self-care is similar to healing, but not the same. Self care leads to healing. It is an active practice of understanding who you are as you undergo major

transitions in life. Losing a child is the worst, major transition that no one would ask for. But in your grief and your process to heal, you only benefit you and your family when you begin to assess what you can and will need from yourself and from others. If you don't know right now or tomorrow? It's OK. It takes time. If it feels selfish at first, that's OK, too. It's not selfish, but it can be uncomfortable to put your needs first when so many of you are feeling the weight of such a heavy loss. However, when each of you allow yourselves to prioritize what you need that will benefit your life and health and reach out to the people who help you accomplish that, it WILL lead to healing. You transform the process in which you understand the importance of your grieving and the importance of healthy coping. You begin to understand how to set boundaries with those who do not honor your loss as an ongoing process and you unapologetically move on from toxic environments toward true community. Through self-care you recognize that when your mental health improves, others around you benefit and want to improve too. You remember that your journey matters and that you matter. And the child you lost matters.

You are not alone. Many others who have endured the tragedy of losing a child. However, your journey through this difficult loss is different, and as important than any other mother's. You deserve unlimited time to grieve and unlimited time to heal. How you do that is up to you. But remind yourself of the power you have to take care of yourself, to reach out, to set boundaries and to take time. Your grief and healing matter. So take your time because you matter, too.

--Tiffany Wicks Dallas TX



## Belongings

People might tell you to get rid of your loved one's belongings right away.

They think that her possessions will be painful "reminders". Don't listen to them. Keep them for as long as you need to. If you disposed of her things you may regret it later.

What harm does it do if her toothbrush is still in the bathroom for a while or is you can't bring yourself to wash her pillow case? So what if her clothes are still in her closet or her record player still has her favorite disk on the turntable? Must you give away her favorite sweater—all because

somebody says you should?

Keeping your love's clothes undisturbed for a time, can be very comforting. Smelling the cologne that lingers on her pillow case can feel good. If you close your eyes you can pretend, for a second, that she's in the room with you. Wearing her sweater not only keeps you warm but you can feel as though her arms are around you.

Seeing and touching her things allows you to feel like a part of her is still with you as you grapple with reality. Please note, I have suggested this as a TEMPORARY measure—an important distinction. Although no time limit can be placed on how long keeping her things is appropriate—it differs for each of us—the grieving person who leaves a room untouched for five years is different from one who “can't let go” of her love's belongings for 12 or 14 months.

Eventually the time will come when you think you can move your loved one's things. If you're not exactly sure what to keep and what to dispose of, box up those things you can't decide on and store them in the basement or attic. Periodically, you may want to go through these boxes. Each time you may be able to let go of more things. Of course, some of your child's possessions will bring back bittersweet memories, and you'll cry. Let the tears flow.

You might need to keep certain of her things forever. And that's okay too. I know, because there's a special box I've kept in my closet for many years. Most of the time I forget it's there, but every couple of years I open it and look at the “beautiful” drawings Arthur did in kindergarten, or at one small tennis shoe, or at his tee shirt with “Artie” emblazoned across the front.

It feels good, these many years later, to touch what he touched. Sure, it hurts for a moment when I wonder what he'd look like now as an adult, but then I put the lid on the box and slide it back into the closet. And I'm glad I've still got part of him with me.

--Margaret H. Gerner, MSW

## What I have Learned about Grief and Myself in the Year Since Our Son's Suicide

Just as it is necessary for a parent to keep changing the relationship with his child as the child grows and matures, so at a child's death it is also necessary (though painful) to begin to structure a final, realistic, enduring relationship that will provide

a comfortable substitute for the love and hope a parent enjoys with a living child.

When we lose a loved one, the loss leaves within us a hole that he or she once occupied. The greater the love, the bigger and deeper the hole. Time will heal the wound, but it is what we put into the hole (in the form of love and compassion, caring and sharing with others) that determines whether we will ever become whole again, or if we will for the rest of our lives be emotionally handicapped and deformed.

While others may find this controversial, I have come to realize that suicide is just another way to die and quite a formal way for the emotionally handicapped. The problem many times is the impossibility of recognizing a terminal emotional handicap. As simple and self-evident as the following statements seem to be, I believe that in their true meaning is a real hope for recovery.

There are only two ways to handle grief: suppress it, or deal with it. I am sure we all know which way is best and why.

The only way to get over grief is TO GO THROUGH IT! We must WORK to overcome grief. Recognized for what it is, The Compassionate Friends meetings are a form of GRIEF WORK. There is a choice involved in how long one grieves. In the end we must ourselves choose to recover. The Compassionate Friends can play an important role in grief recovery. The emotional massage and therapy we experience while talking and sharing with other bereaved parents is without reasonable alternative for our emotional recovery and continued well-being.

-- B G Barnick TCF Dallas TX

## Dear Loved One,

I know you mean well. I believe you. I 100% believe you have the best intentions for her. She isn't the same person and that probably scares you. You think of her before her (and your) loss, and you might wonder why things aren't going back to the way they were.

You try and fix her broken heart by telling her things that you would think would make it all better, or in the past make her smile.

Somehow your words of comfort aren't doing the trick. She might even be pushing you away. I beg you – don't take it personal.

She hardly knows what to do with her own bazillion emotions, much less yours. So she isn't



trying to hurt you, but she also might not have the best ways of expressing just how much she still needs you.

You miss her laughter. You miss her jokes and conversation about trivial things. You want to remember her child with her, but somehow – to you – it might seem like she's taking it a little far.

I'm here to ask you to leave her alone. No, don't walk out on her. That's not what I am talking about. Quite the opposite.

Let her go a little crazy. (She's not crazy, by the way.) She is grieving the death of her child. She is the only person in the entire history of the universe that feels the full impact of this loss.

She's alone. She has you, but really? She is doing this by herself.

So watch her as she visits the grave site frequently (or not). Go with her. She might say it's okay that you don't, but don't listen to that. She might not thank you for joining her, but go anyway. I guarantee your presence will not go unnoticed.

Study the things that become suddenly important to her. Online blogs, forums, support groups, angels, wings, feathers, butterflies, certain jewelry pieces, songs, colors, places. Don't stop obsessing over why you fell in love with her in the first place. She's still in there. I promise.

She is doing her absolute best to mend her own heart but no one handed her the manual on how this was going to happen when the casket was lowered. She's winging it, just like you are. And you love her, so trust me when I say I'm on your side too.

She sheds a thousand tears a day, and you might be lucky to spot a few. She knows you're quite tired of her sadness. She knows that you care, but she is also tired of seeing you exasperated when you realize you can't fix her.

She hasn't stopped crying. She just cries more when you're not around.

So instead of trying to fix her sadness the next time, just listen. Nothing you can say or do or buy can make her pain any less painful.

She isn't crying so that you will fix her, she's crying because she can't help it. It actually has nothing to do with you.

You might notice her go from sad to depressed to completely angry and back to sad in a day. I know it's scary to watch someone we love become someone we hardly recognize anymore, but the things she need more than anything is your unconditional and demonstrative love and support.

She needs to know she is safe, no matter where she lands.

And we aren't forgetting about your pain too, because while she is breaking into a million pieces, you too, are bearing the pain and weight of this loss, and to top that off maybe even a little misplaced, self-induced guilt for not being able to make her feel better.

Admitting just how devastating this all has been for you too, can be a constructive way to reunite after loss. Consider opening up to her.

Above all else, support her. In her anger, in her sadness, in her depression, in her lonely spells, in her confusion, in her wandering, in her distance and in her closeness. There are few things that hinder healing more than judgment from loved ones.

She will make it through this to the other side. She won't always be bombarded by the most intense pain that new grief delivers on a regular basis, but she will never be quite the same.

And she needs you to be okay with that.  
--Franchesca Cox

## Newly Bereaved...



The following is a summary of some of the human issues that need to be dealt with after the death of a child:

- \* I need to hear that I was a good mom/dad.
- \* I need to know that I did the best I could.
- \* I need to know I'm not being punished by God.
- \* I need to know that it's OK not to be OK.
- \* I need to know I'm not alone in these jagged moments of loss/death.
- \* I need to know people love me, that I really matter to them.
- \* I need to know that I don't have an answer to "WHY"
- \* I need to know that it's OK to have those extended ambivalent feelings of wanting to be alone and wanting people around me; of loving while seething with rage and anger; of seeing and not seeing what's around me.
- \* I need time and patient understanding to work all this through.

--Rev. John Hester Stanford University Hospital

## Seasoned Grievers...

### February: An Arrow Through the Heart



Where has the time gone? How did I live these past five years? I look back to where I was in February 1987, and see that I have indeed come a long way. But what amazes me is that I did it, that somehow I moved along. Perhaps...it's because I realize that if five years of my life have passed since my son died and when I reflect on all of the things our family has not been able to share with him, I am so startled. Or possibly...it's because the winter season has been so mild, like it was the year he died.

Maybe, in looking at what his death—in his memory, for ourselves, for him—my emotions are vacillating. Whatever may be prompting me to explore my five-year journey, I am thankful. I am thankful for my wonderful and not-so-wonderful memories, for the ability still to cry, for the longing within my heart that has become a welcomed companion as I journey forward in life. I am thankful for my dear friends (both old and new), for the direction and purpose my son has given me for my journey, the support my family gives while I pursue my studies. For the compassion and empathy I can feel for others, and the opportunity to reach out to people. Yes, I have many things to be thankful for, and yet, I would give all these away to have my son once again.

But I know that this is impossible; so I will go forward, progress, not waste precious moments in time. Time is both a friend and a foe to bereaved people, but all moments in time are precious—they are what make up our memories.

As I see the decorations for Valentines Day and Cupid's arrow piercing my heart, my loss becomes more vivid because my heart has been broken. Yes, I have "an arrow through my heart", and yes, the connotation of love is also attached to my arrow and heart-only, my heart aches for what is lost. But the pain I feel is because of the great life I had. The experience of that love will never die, the memory of that love, of my beloved son, will live on forever in my heart.

I have decided that it's okay to keep the arrow in my heart; it's always near and a gentle nudge brings back such wonderful memories. As Kahil

Gibran so eloquently stated, "When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you will see that, in truth, you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

--Elaine Sullivan, Survivors of Suicide

## For Friends & Family...

### Remember the Four "T's" for Helping Grieving Persons:

**Talk** Grievers need to talk. They need to say the same things over and over again. You can help with non-judgmental listening. Platitudes or telling the griever how he "should" feel, or that someone else has a worse loss, is not helpful.

**Tears** Grievers need to cry. Crying is a healthy outlet for the stress of grief. Contrary to what most people think, crying at the loss of a loved one is not a sign of weakness, but that the griever loved.

**Touch** Grievers need to be touched. An arm around the shoulder or a hand held means a lot. A hug says "I care" and "I'm here for you."

**Time** Grief takes time. Grieving people don't get "better" on a steadily upward path. The process is more like a roller coaster, bad days and good days and, back again to bad days. Be patient.

Remember birthdays, anniversaries and the holidays. They are difficult for grievers.

--Margaret Gerner, MSW

## Helpful Hint...



### Grief Is an Emotion

Grief is an emotion, not a disease.

There is no time table for recovery.

But there is also no getting around the pain.

Each of us has to experience the pain in order to recover from it...

Our hopes and dreams may no longer be possible.

We may feel hopeless and want to run away.

It takes time and effort to regain the ability to function.

We must express our feelings and be patient with ourselves.

Grief is a process.

Recovery is a decision.

Readjustment does not come overnight.  
But each of us can resolve to survive - one moment at a time.

-- Bereaved Parents USA Cromwell CT



## Welcome...

### Welcome To Our Meetings

Some of you who have been receiving the newsletter have never attended a meeting. The reasons are varied, but perhaps some of these reasons are fear or misconception. Perhaps you've thought:

I couldn't bear to break down and cry in front of strangers.

You may not know us, but we have buried a child. We understand your tears.

The group might be only for parents who have lost young children. My child was 27.

We have absolutely no age limit and parents come who have lost children of all ages.

My child has been dead for years. It's probably only for parent whose children have died recently.

There is no time limit on your bereavement here. We're here for as long as you need our support.

(Perhaps you could give your support to some of the more newly bereaved.)

They probably would expect me to talk about it... I don't want to.

There is absolutely no pressure to talk about your child's death or to make you uncomfortable in any way. Perhaps you would rather listen. Many of us have felt that way at one time or another.

What would they think if they knew my child died by (drug overdoses, suicide, my carelessness.)

What would we think? We're here to support— not to judge or condemn. Death carries with it feelings of guilt, which all of us struggle to dispel.

I'd like to go, but know my husband/wife won't come with me.

People grieve in different ways and may have need of different support systems. We have parents whose spouses do not attend meetings as well as single parents. Perhaps you want to bring a friend.

-- D. Worrell TCF, Ventura Co. Chapter, CA

## Book in Review...



### ***Beyond Tears: Living After Losing A Child***

The death of a child is that unimaginable loss no

parent ever expects to face. In *Beyond Tears*, nine mothers have their individual stories of how to survive in the darkest hour. They candidly share with other bereaved parents what to expect in the first year and long beyond.

\*Harmonious relations can become strained

\*There is a new definition of what one considers "normal"

\*The question "how many children do you have?" can be devastating

\*Mothers and fathers mourn and cope differently

\*There simply is no answer to "why"

This sharing in itself is a catharsis and because each of these mothers lost her child at least seven years ago, she is in a unique position to provide perspective on what newly bereaved parents can expect to feel. The mothers of *Beyond Tears* offer reassurance that the clouds of grief do lessen with time and that grieving parents will find a way to live, and even laugh again.

--TCF South Suburban Evergreen Park, IL

## Where You Are...

Are my tears holding you back, is my pain holding you down, do you yearn to fly... to be free?

But you are no longer here...

I hope you are where you need to be to fulfill your destiny and not hold back to appease my sadness...

In actual time, on this plane... it has been a long time...

In my heart time has stopped... you were here just a short while ago...

In whatever plane and space your spirit dwells, I desire nothing but peace for you...

I set you free from a place of deep love... a place of gratitude for having chosen me as your mother during your brief stay this time around...

I see you in my mind, I feel you in my heart... that will never, never change...

I will know, when the time is right, where you are...

I imagine that will come to be when I leave this place I know as life...

Until then...

Mama

--By Kitty Forstner, TCF Marin County Chapter

"Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding."

--Kahlil Gibran



## A Valentine To All My Compassionate Friends



We who have had our hearts so badly broken  
know each other.  
We have lost a child, grandchild, a sister, or a  
brother.  
It matters not if we've seen each other's faces.  
We share mending hearts, full of achy places.  
At first our hearts feel shredded and torn.  
We might even wish that we'd never been born.  
We don't understand how our lives went so  
wrong.  
Everyone tells us they're so glad that we're  
strong.  
All we know is that we hurt to the core.  
Because a child, dearly loved, is with us no  
more.  
With time, patience, and understanding we  
begin to heal.  
We begin to accept what is, and life starts to  
seem real.  
Each time we tell our tale, each hug we receive,  
Puts a band-aid on the hurting spots and gives us  
reason to believe.  
That we will feel joy again, that life does go on.  
Though we're never quite the same, since our  
child is gone.  
Compassionate Friends teach us ways we can  
cope, until we can live again and face life with  
hope.  
So, to TCF members, whether we've met or not.  
Thank you for the band-aids on that bruised  
healing spot.

I Love You All

–Kathy Hahn, TCF Lower Bucks, PA

## Bewilderment

Get the coffee ready  
Empty the dishwasher  
Feed the cats, the dog, the turtle  
Make the beds  
But not his bed  
Check the calendar  
Make the shopping list  
Think about what to make for dinner  
Eight hours from now  
But not his dinner  
Water the plants  
Answer the phone  
Glance at the paper  
Gather the scattered socks

The forgotten toys  
But not his toys  
Get in the car  
Take one child to karate  
Pick up another at piano  
Buy some stamps  
Drawn to the cemetery  
To kneel at his grave  
Buy the groceries  
Unload the car  
Pull some weeds  
Recycle the junk mail  
Wonder why I'm not screaming  
--Paula Lucore, BP/USA, Springfield, IL

## Open Up

Each of us  
Is on our own journey,  
Starting out with a sharp shock of pain,  
Descend into a dark cave of grief;  
Swallowed up in sorrow...

Open up  
The possibilities are endless,  
In sorrow and in pain.  
I know that now,  
And I know  
That while the worst can happen  
Somehow we go on.

Open up  
To the light of blue sky.  
Starting in the dark cave of grief,  
The beast uncoils.  
Let it roar,  
Let it whimper,  
Let it go.

Open up  
To the acknowledgment of pain.  
To the knowing that  
We are not in control.  
We move in and out from darkness  
To possibilities.

Open up  
Like spring flowers pushing  
Up through the snow.  
Knowledge that while sorrow remains,  
And the beast of grief lives on,  
So too does memory.  
–Melissa Anne Schroeter TCF Rockland Co. NY

**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 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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reyna Joanne Monje  
Born 9/98 Died: 4/21  
Mother: Debbie Trutanich

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

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

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



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

Natalie Rose Nevarez  
Born: 5/90 Died: 11/14  
Parents: Gregg and Alison  
Nevarez

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: Desiree Palmer

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

Lilly Parker  
Born: 12/15 Died: 1/17  
Mother: Nicole Kawagish

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

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

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

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

Nicholas M Sinclair  
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22  
Mother: Suzanne Sinclair

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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

Kevin Zelik  
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10  
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

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

\* 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.

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

**Birthday Tributes...**

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

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.

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

—Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.—

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

**For Siblings...**

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

**Silence is Not an Answer in the Time of Grief**

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

This summer I survived the two most devastating realities I have experienced since my father's death in 1980. The first was anguishing in its inevitability: my 31 year old brother's death from the cancer that stalked him for seven years. The second was worsened by its utter uselessness and avoidability: the deliberate way virtually every friend and acquaintance, save my very closest, has avoided and ignored me during this time of grief.

I do not believe that those who knew about Al's death did not worry about me and my family. It is likely that many were concerned. But I know that most of my friends are young, and have not yet had a close family member die. Death is

scary or un-real, and few can envision themselves in the position I have been in twice. In a word, they are ignorant about my feelings and how to react to them.

A few of the braver approached me with hearty, superficial greetings that suggested my absence but not its cause: "Well hello, nice to see you back" or "So school's about to start, are you ready?" This was, for all its well meaning, very painful for me. I felt these people were using trivialities as a way of saying, "These things are more important than his death, and I'm more concerned about today's weather than how terrible you feel." With uneasy smiles on their faces, these people made me feel like a fool. To a few, I said, "Perhaps you didn't know my brother died." The response was a muffled, "Oh, yes... I'm sorry." I stopped volunteering this information: it was awful to realize that these people, through all the banality, knew about Albert, and said nothing. Some people undoubtedly kept silent in the hopes that I would approach them to talk and they could then be duly supportive. This was a gross error of judgment. I needed to have friends voluntarily open their hearts in sympathy, as I was feeling vulnerable and afraid that those I turned to might turn me away. To me, the silence said, "Leave me alone, I don't care."

Still others made efforts to engage me in conversation, as long as I was able to be cheerful and not talk about Albert. To these people, my casual comment like, "Oh, I remember when Albert and I visited that person" was nervously ignored and met by an embarrassed silence. I needed to be able to remember my brother reflectively, without self-consciousness or shame. And even close friends could not

understand that waves of grief, anger and depression affected me in ways I myself could not understand. How I needed their patience and support, their faith that I was angry at Death, and not at them.

My grief is now settling into the long depression that is a necessary step to healing. But every week, people on campus - maybe your friend or roommate - also face the unthinkable tragedy in a place where youth can lead people to feel immortal. These people need your support, and it's not hard to give it to them. If someone you know, whether closely or just vaguely, is bereaved, please don't be shy or afraid. Take the initiative, walk up, look into his or her eyes and say, "I am so sorry to hear about the death." (Only one person did this to me. Though I was not particularly close to him, his generosity moved me to tears.)

You need not give your philosophy on tragedy in life or your favorite remedy for depression. The bereaved person does not expect or want this. And if you consider yourself to be a close friend of the bereaved person, now is your chance to prove it. Listening - not avoiding the bereaved's sadness or being afraid to have the friend cry to you - is essential. If your friend does cry, consider yourself lucky that he or she is comfortable enough to share these deep emotions with you.

And don't try to stop the tears - they are also a step to healing and must flow freely. If you feel anger or hostility directed at you, take comfort that anger and grief are interconnected. The friend is not angry at you, it is simply his desperate attempt to justify or focus the waves of anger and desolation that surge uncontrollably through him.

If the bereaved are surrounded by people who care, the grieving process is made less bitter and devastating. Yet caring and concern for your friend is meaningless unless you directly tell her that you do care. I understand that Dad and Albert had no intention of abandoning me, that they left me through no power of their own. The intentions of my silent friends are much less clear. Remember this: Just say, "I heard, and I'm sorry."

--Cendra (ken'dra) Lynn, Ph.D. Rivendell

Resources [griefnet@rivendell.org](mailto:griefnet@rivendell.org) PO  
Box 3272 [griefnet@ic.net](mailto:griefnet@ic.net) Ann Arbor, MI,  
48106-3272 313 / 761-1960



"Somewhere in my dreams tonight  
I'll see you standing there  
You look at me with a smile  
'Life isn't always fair' "

## Grieving the Death of a Sibling Feelings and Emotions

You may be experiencing grief over the death of your sibling if you feel any of the following – shock, numbness, sadness, despair, loneliness, isolation, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, irritability, anger, increased or decreased appetite, fatigue or sleeplessness, guilt, regret, depression, anxiety, crying, headaches, weakness, aches, pains, yearning, worry, frustration, detachment, isolation, questioning faith – to name a few.

Okay, so those things aren't specific to sibling grief, however, the way they are experienced by someone grieving a brother or sister may be. For example:

You feel guilty because...

...you are the sibling that survived.

...you knew your sibling inside and out and yet you didn't know about the struggles or hardships that led to their death.

...you weren't able to protect them.

...there are things you wish you had said, but didn't.

You feel anxiety because...

...you know how fragile life is.

...you're worried you may die in the same way as your sibling.

...you're worried others in your family may die.

You feel lonely because...

...although you're surrounded by people, you miss the one person who you could truly be yourself with.

I could go on, but the important thing is to understand that your feelings are unique and important.

Good, bad, or anywhere in between, your relationship with your brother or sister was different than anyone else's and so you'll experience hurdles, triggers, and hardships that

others may not.

Your parents, siblings, and other family members may grieve in many of the same ways that you do, but in many ways, their grief may differ. It's important to remember this because misunderstandings can arise amongst family members when people react differently in response to a death. It's also important for people supporting bereaved siblings to keep this in mind so they can help validate and support the griever's feelings and experiences.

You miss the hell out of them. Sibling relationships obviously vary in their degrees of closeness, love, and amicability. Some siblings may be thick as thieves, others wonder whether they're even really related. Regardless, siblings are our ties to family bonds. They have known us the longest. They understand our history and are the people with whom we have the longest running jokes.

They are our bridesmaids and our groomsmen. They are our children's aunts and uncles. They bail us out when we're in trouble, they loan us money, and then we loan it back. They are the most judgmental people we know. They are the most accepting and loving people we know. Siblings can never be replaced and when they are gone we miss the hell out of them.

Source: 'What's Your Grief'



## For Grandparents...

### Death of One's Child or Grandchild in Late Life

Older bereaved parents may have guilt that the pain of a loss of a child affected the relationships with surviving children. The loss of a grandchild causes intense emotional upset, regrets about the relationship with the deceased grandchild, and the need to restructure relationship with surviving family.

#### *How to Cope With The Loss of a Grandchild*

When you become a grandparent, you do not stop being a parent. Your love, care and concern for your child remains constant throughout your lifetime. Because of this, when a grandparent loses a grandchild, the anguish is doubled. You grieve for both your deceased grandchild and your child. You may even feel you have lost a part of yourself and your future.

At times, you may find it difficult to be a

supporting parent to your bereaved child while trying to cope as a bereaved grandparent. You may focus on comforting and caring for your child and neglect your own feelings. Remember that both you and your child need care and support as you move through the grief process.

#### *Suggestions for Grieving Grandparents*

Try to create a support system for yourself outside of the family circle. Encourage your child to do the same. Check with your local hospice, hospital or church for support groups. Be aware that every member of the family will grieve differently because each has had a different relationship with the child. It is normal to have different grief experiences.

Consider spending additional time with your grandchildren and finding grief resources for them. The surviving children in the family may feel neglected or left out. When all of the adults are grieving, they have little energy to give support and attention to a grieving child. Although the parents are physically present, they are often emotionally unavailable to the surviving children.

Keep your memories alive. Although they may bring tears and longing for the child, memories can also bring comfort.

Remember that grief can affect you physically. Get a thorough checkup from your physician, take your medication, eat nutritious meals, rest and exercise regularly.

-- Adapted from an article by Nancy E. Crump, M.S., Certified Grief Counselor

## From Our Members...



### Why?

After a while, you reduce all of your tortures to one simple question: Why?

You no longer say, "What if...?"

You no longer say, "How could this happen?"

You only ask, Why!

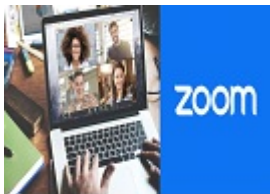
Until one day, you find yourself sobbing the truth: No one can ever know.

--Sascha Wagner

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. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccia79@gmail.com) for the link.

**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](mailto: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: Feb.1st for March 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.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please remember to return them to our library.

**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.

**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](mailto: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
- 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://thetearsfoundation.org)
- [goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)
- [bereavedparentsusa.org](http://bereavedparentsusa.org)
- [healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)
- [survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)
- [taps.org](http://taps.org) (military death)
- [save.org](http://save.org) (suicide/depression)
- [pomc.com](http://pomc.com) (families of murder victims)
- [grasphelp.org](http://grasphelp.org) (substance abuse deaths)
- [www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub](http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub) (Suicide)
- [Griefwords.com](http://Griefwords.com) (for grandparents)
- [childloss.com](http://childloss.com)
- [griefwatch.dom](http://griefwatch.dom)
- [opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)
- [webhealing.com](http://webhealing.com)
- [alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)
- [angelmoms.com](http://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

Marilyn Nemeth

Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

**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 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](http://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 Compassionate Friends 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 Jonathan "Jamie" Schubert, July 1965 - December 2006. Known as a warrior for the most needy.  
From The Schubert - Grabb Family

In loving memory of Andrew Sakura, March 1990 - March 2008. Love, Bruce & Karen Sakura

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

In loving memory of Benjamin Moules, March 2007 - May 2020. Forever loved and remembered.  
Love, Mama, Papa, Jacob & Sofia

In loving memory of my son, William Joseph Britton III, March 1962 - July 1985. Love, Mom

In loving memory of Mark Edler, Nov. 1973 - Jan. 1992, Rich Edler & Roxi Moore. Love, Kitty Edler

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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–Return Service Requested–



February 2023

## 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.