



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

March 2023 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be March 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, March 2nd meeting will start with "Unscrambling My Feelings."

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, March 2nd meeting will start with “Unscrambling My Feelings”.** Your child is dead...What a concept for any bereaved parent to have to acknowledge. It's as if your whole life has exploded! Through overwhelming pain and shock we start the grieving process. As we rebuild our life, we examine old beliefs and adjust to living in a surreal world. This meeting we will discuss some of the questions we struggle with and lessons we learn as we rebuild our lives, one step at a time.

Life continues following the death of a loved one. So how can you function when your heart is not in it? "What right do I have to be happy when my child is dead?" or, "If I feel better, am I abandoning my child?" Those and many more questions can bring feelings of guilt and rob us of any healing we've felt. Ask yourself, can I ever look forward to life or feel joy again, when it's easier to stay in this pit of despair that is becoming so familiar? Ask yourself, what would my child want me to do?

By questioning and examining our inner-self, we learn new tools to show us how to refocus and change our priorities and ways of dealing with things, so life can feel worth living again. I hope the following articles will awaken the questions you still have to contemplate on your road to healing your broken heart. We welcome you to come listen or share, what you and other bereaved parents have done to help “unscramble our feelings” and help ourselves go on after the loss of our child.

### **A Broken Heart Doesn't Show**

“We are the walking wounded. Our lives are seemingly normal for those looking at us from the outside, but we know differently – for a broken heart doesn't show from the outside,” said a participant in my grief support group. It is true that life continues following the death of a loved one. Groceries still need to be bought and clothes laundered. Jobs require our attendance and our attention. Little league games, dance recitals, graduations and weddings still take place. For those grieving, it takes enormous effort to participate in these rituals of life. The daily “got-to-dos” and the occasional “special event” all beckon to us at a time when we would rather just curl up until the world begins to make sense again.

So how can you function when your heart is not in it? How can you find a way to care if you eat a



hot meal or just make a bowl of cold cereal do for dinner?

The bigger question is – How can you be anything but involved with life? It calls to you each day. It urges you to get up and be a part of it. Not in spite of your grief, but because of it. The only way to journey through grief is to get up each day and see what the Universe brings your way. We are social beings by nature, so staying home hibernating does not help us to feel better. Our emotional pain does not diminish if we become a recluse nor can we sleep our pain away. When we are out in the world doing our “normal” routine that has now become anything but normal, it allows us to reach out to others for help and understanding. It allows us to remember our loved one and how they were a part of this schedule and, how in some ways, still are.

Distraction can be a wonderful tool when mourning a loss. Staying busy can keep you from thinking too much about what has changed in your life and you may even catch yourself having a laugh or two with others. Used skillfully, distraction can bring you into the present moment where healing can take place. So much of grief is looking back with regret or forward with fear. It is only when we are truly present that we can get a bit of relief from the overwhelming emotional pain. Working, shopping, even ironing can help you regroup and realign. However, too much distraction that does not allow you the time and space to grieve is not healthy either. You must find a balance between time to get quiet and remember and time for busyness.

This may not be easy, but the world still calls to you. There are things to do and people to meet and somehow you need to find the inner strength to get out and be a part of it all. While others may not understand why you seem distant or sad, for your heart is unseen, being with others is still the best salve for your hidden wound. Remember the immortal words of Robert Frost, “In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.” It does... and so will you.

--Nancy Weil South Suburban Chapter Newsletter  
Evergreen Park, IL

### **Walking Through Grief**

he walked...  
the funeral was over  
the crowds had gone home

life had resumed for some  
 what would resume for him  
 how can he hold his Grief  
 how can he be there for her sisters  
 what to do when no sleep came  
 how does he endure this chaos  
 so he walked...  
 in the dark  
 before sunrise each morning  
 a strange figure on local streets  
 head down hood pulled low  
 he walked to wrestle his Grief  
 he walked to wrestle Life  
 he walked to shout at Death  
 so premature, so lonely, so unjustified  
 he walked for his sanity  
 he walked to find his way through  
 he walked  
 and he walked  
 and he walked....  
 and over time his walking changed  
 from dark to light  
 from confusion to purpose  
 and  
 over time  
 he found his Way  
 he thanks his daughter for her Guidance.



After the death of my youngest daughter in 2005, like many parents struggling with the enormity of such a loss, I really didn't know what to do and how I would possibly cope. As a psychologist, I felt perhaps even more challenged as I knew the 'theories'. I knew what I was perhaps supposed to do... supposed to feel even ... but little seemed to help me.

But now on reflection, some things did. This is a brief story about one of these things. After many sleepless nights, many late cups of tea (and stronger mixers!), much wandering aimlessly and emotionally around a shrouded house, I found myself, early one morning... well... walking.

In the dark, pre dawn, I found myself walking the local streets. I didn't set out with any conscious idea that walking would help my grief. I didn't set out to do walking 'therapy'. It just happened. And walking sort of took on a life of its own. And as I walked I found that I experienced many emotions.

Sometimes I felt great anger, sometimes tears came and sometimes a strange kind of calm acceptance would settle over me. I didn't seem to

have a lot of say in these emotions. They just came, and went. So I allowed them; I welcomed them. I also found that I would walk and talk to myself and talk to my daughter. Sometimes there seemed only the two of us in the darkness and then sometimes, there was just me...

Walking soon became my early morning ritual and I walked in this way for many many mornings. If for some reason I was unable, I missed it dearly. Over time, I began to reflect on the reasons why walking was so helpful. In retrospect, I now realize that in some ways I walked not just with my grief, but through my grief. And if this was so helpful, why wasn't it talked about more or regularly recommended as a way of helping to cope with one's grief?

Having a brief look at the literature, it would seem that science has discovered what most of us (our bodies, minds and spirits) have already intuitively long known, and I found there is now a growing body of evidence that links exercise (especially low impact exercise like walking) to all sorts of physical benefits, like reduced heart disease, lower blood pressure and a positive impact on a whole range of problems.

There is also growing acceptance of the link between exercise and mental health, and in particular a newer understanding of the positive links between exercise, trauma and healing. I realized too that there are also ways of walking which, knowingly or unknowingly, tap into age old stress and trauma management principles (of bilateral movement) that underlie successful contemporary stress and trauma management techniques such as EMDR and EFT. But that's a whole other story. What is worth noting here is that walking helps with grief. And particular ways of walking, with conscious intent, in certain spaces and places can help even more.

While I am now 'further down the track' than many, one of the things I have learned is that life does go on, whether we wish it to or not and it is critical in our own grief journey to realize that we are always challenged by how we are going to live that life. And although we may feel it at times, we are not completely powerless in our grief. As Attig states grieving does not have to be passive, we do not have to be helpless but can make active choices towards healing. For me, walking was one of those choices.

And finally, I am not saying that walking 'fixes' grief or suddenly transforms it in some magical

way, but I am saying that walking is a way of embracing our grief and our need to continue on the road of life in what can ultimately be a healthy, positive and constructive path.

I still walk regularly (with unfortunately some gaps!) and my daughter, in her own way, still accompanies me. Both our journeys are different now, but we still enjoy the time together.

--by Tony Gee TCF Victoria Australia

## Self-care: Welcoming Happiness



The moments when I began to feel happy again during my grief journey took me by surprise. Whether it was an evening out with friends, or goofing around with my boys, happiness started to slowly seep back into a life that was so black and cold. But why would happiness be so disconcerting, especially when you are already so unhappy? We should welcome happiness in, not reject it, right? It's a sign that the grieving parent is healing, right? It's a good thing, right? Wrong.

For many grieving parents, happiness in the wake of our loss can cause us to feel guilty. We feel as though we shouldn't be happy again, after suffering such a profound loss. Staying in the dark, dank sadness, shutting out the sunshine and warmth of happiness, makes us feel closer to our deceased child. We loved them so much that we can't possibly ever be happy again. These are the things we feel and think, and they are perfectly normal.

These conflicting emotions were a challenge for me, and in conversations with many grieving moms, I've discovered that this is a common occurrence. But, truly, any emotional state is unsustainable on a permanent basis. We can't stay angry or sad or disappointed forever, and we won't always be happy, either. After all, sad times help us to appreciate the happy times that much more. The contrast of our emotions gives our life depth and breadth. With that in mind we must realize that in order to take care of ourselves, we must allow ourselves to be happy.

One of the things that helped me most to understand this was to think about how sad my children were when they saw me sad. When they caught me crying, they would be on the verge of tears. I realized that my boys didn't like to see me unhappy. By extrapolation, it would follow that

Colin wouldn't want me to be sad all the time either. I know my children won't always be happy, but I hope they are happy, or at least content more often than not. I had to consider whether or not I would want Colin to see me so unhappy, considering my unhappiness was a result of his death. I had to consider whether or not I would want him to see so much sadness within me as a result of his death.

My conclusion? I didn't want that at all. I wouldn't want to burden my son with my darkness. I gradually started to accept the light as it wedged its way into my life. My being happy didn't lessen my love for Colin, not even a little bit. In fact, I like to think that when he looks down and sees us smiling, he is smiling, too. P.S. Smiling actually makes you feel happier—biologically! When you smile, your body releases endorphins, serotonin and natural pain killers. So take a chance and smile. It doesn't make your loss any less important. It doesn't make you insensitive. It makes you human. Welcome happiness.

--From Still Standing Magazine, Chicagoland Chapter Bereaved Parents of the USA

## The Power of 'And': How One Word Changed the Way I Grieve

Five weeks after our baby Dorothy died, my nephew was born. I remember going to our weekly therapy session and sharing this news with our therapist. Of course she wanted to know how I was feeling about his arrival. I replied that I was so happy that he was safely here but I was also happy that he lived across the country so I didn't have to see him yet. "And" she replied. I looked at her puzzled. She continued, "And. You are happy he is here AND you are happy that you don't have to see him right now. Rachel, you don't have to choose."

After we left our session that day, I couldn't stop thinking about that one little word. Ever since Dorothy's death, I had found myself trying to separate my reemerging feelings of happiness from the steady depression I was in. Much like a child trying to keep their peas from touching their mashed potatoes, I wanted my feelings of devastation to be untouched by any glimmers of joy I might be feeling. I didn't think it was possible for them to co-exist. Three simple letters changed that.

I began testing out this powerful little word.



Whenever I had been feeling differing emotions, I had used the word 'but' to keep them distant. What if I used 'and' to bring them together? It's a beautiful day outside AND I just can't face the world today. That new picture of my nephew is so adorable AND it reminds me of how much I miss Dorothy. I'm looking forward to seeing my family AND I'm anxious to be around them. I want to talk about Dorothy AND I'm nervous about what others will have to say about her.

'And' was slowly changing my world. That one word was giving me the freedom to experience the storm of emotions that had been quietly raging inside. I didn't have to wait for each feeling to pass over me completely, I could start feeling them in connection. Before 'and', there had been so much guilt about the happiness that was sneaking its way back into my life. Now, I had permission to let happiness start to color the darkness of my grief.

Over the next weeks and months, I exercised the power of 'and.' With the recent birth of my nephew, I found many opportunities to use my new magic word. I'm so happy that my sister-in-law is a mother AND I wish that was me. I want to send my nephew this cute new outfit AND I wish I could be buying clothes for my own child instead. I want to be included in my nephew's life AND sometimes it's just too hard. I'm so excited to be an aunt AND I'm so worried that Dorothy is going to be forgotten.

It wasn't a solution or a remedy, but it was a tool. The burden of Dorothy's death was a heavy one. I was struggling under the weight of the emotions I had been trying to ignore and I needed help. My grief for Dorothy was never going away, but I needed something to help me carry the load throughout my life. Without a tool, I was going to be crushed. 'And' helped alleviate some of the pressure. I felt like I could breathe again. I felt like I was remembering how to live AND love.

My husband and I recently "graduated" from therapy. (To be clear, I will probably go back to therapy many times in my life because it is extremely important for my family and our well-being.) At our last session, my therapist asked us if we had any feedback for her. I thanked her for 'And.' She smiled and said that was glad I found it helpful in my healing. "I have found it helpful." I replied. "And I still have a lot of healing left to do."

--By Rachel Whalen,

<https://unexpectedfamilyouting.com/2017/09/27/>



DOs



## Do's/Don't; Helps/Hindrances



DON'Ts



My name is Barbara Parsons and I have been a bereaved parent since Nov. 24, 1991 when my son Robert died by suicide. Robert had a learning disability and with that came self esteem/self value issues and lots of frustrations. We worked very hard to help him with this and although school was difficult, he fought hard for every grade he earned.

He was a sensitive child and the "listener" in his group of friends. He was always available to listen to other kids problems, yet he rarely, if ever, talked of his own. We looked at this as a positive characteristic; little did we know at the time how detrimental this was. As an adolescent he did not know how to "let go" of all his peers woes; he added them to his own.

In Nov. 1990 at age 14, some of his behavior patterns changed and he started acting out. We initially thought this was due to adolescence and hormonal changes; after all, this is what other parents said their kids were acting like. For Robert though, it was his crying out for help. A school counselor suggested that we get professional family counseling. On our first visit, the counselor spent some initial time with Robert alone. Robert revealed to the counselor that he felt suicidal. We immediately took him for a psychiatric evaluation and he was diagnosed with clinical depression. We returned home with medication and continued with counseling.

After about 6 months, Robert seemed to be doing better, talking more and less dark days. The summer before his death was one of his best and the counselor agreed to give us "some time off" although he had not yet discovered the root cause of Robert's depression. Our encouragement was short lived.

As the start of school approached we could tell that Robert was withdrawing and shortly after school started his Dad and I agreed that we should go back to counseling. Robert had another thought altogether. He reluctantly went to a few sessions and he started on medication again. He never made it to his last counseling session... He completed suicide on Nov. 24, 1991.

The mask of depression had hidden him from us and it was worse than we or the counselor knew... we all ran out of time. Robert shed his mask thru death and I took up another type mask

altogether.

Grief from the death of a child is the most significant self-evaluation a person can do, mentally, physically, emotionally, both for the parents and family. For a long time, it is a life of extremes. Elation/depression; peace/pain; riding the wave/drowning in the wave; guilt/anger/desperation; loss of the familiar, I think you get the picture.

While I have experienced all the stages of grief, the "guilt period" was the longest and hardest for me; the if Onlys; why didn't I; why did I; what did I do wrong; why didn't the school see the gravity of his depression; why didn't the counselor "fix" it (he was the professional, after all); I am the parent, surely I should have known how depressed he was; why couldn't I see it in his eyes; why didn't he reveal his pain to his Mother, surely I could have saved him. I loved him more than life itself; didn't he know that; didn't he feel that.. What was in that last drop of water that made his cup overflow? I kept asking the questions; trying to find answers and someone to blame. I finally had to accept there were few, if any, answers and blame went nowhere... Robert made a life altering decision while in a hopeless state.

Don't take away my grief. I need it... I need to go thru each phase/stage to get to healing. I need to go thru it so I can get beyond surviving to "thriving". I need to go thru it and embrace it and incorporate it into my new normal so I can let Robert's "death" go and establish a new relationship with my son and remember his life and who and what he was to me. Although I didn't find one.

I need this journey to find out who and what I am now and what I will do with my life now. Tell me it's OK....Okay to feel angry, guilty, depressed, desperate, sad, for these are normal feelings for grieving. Tell me in time I will be able to turn my anger into forgiveness and my guilt into regret. Tell me I won't feel sad forever; that this intense grief will soften. Tell me this time frame is different for each person so I won't try to hurry it along based on another's grief or what the world thinks is an appropriate time to grieve. Don't tell me that time heals, tell me that time offers the opportunity to heal. Don't tell me I'm doing well and are a very strong person. I may be those things, but mostly I feel weak inside. Tell me it's okay to challenge my faith because my faith can withstand the challenge and offer me comfort and



rest. Let me talk....I need to tell you about his depression and troubled last year. I need to tell my story over and over and over, for hearing it with my own ears and saying it out loud gives it less control over me. Let me talk... I am desperate to tell you about my son, our good times, our not so good times; what a great hug he had; what his laughter did to my soul; let me tell you what I miss about him....just let me talk and while I'm talking....just listen.

Tell me about support groups.....tell me about The Compassionate Friends. This is where I'll meet other bereaved parents who have walked this journey and will help me heal. They will offer compassion only born of the same tragedy and will not judge how my son died, but ask about his life and show me that somehow I will make it. Tell me about Survivors of Suicide support group for this is where I will be able to seek some understanding into my son's mind and the side roads I must travel because he took his own life.

Be honest with me....you see I've been given something no one should have to go through so there's nothing you can say or do that would bring much more pain. If you think I'm stuck in my grief and yes sometimes we do get "stuck".... tell me (gently please) and I'll do my best to see it for myself and work hard to get beyond stuck. You see, sometimes we get tired of grieving and want to put it away for awhile, but that's not the way grief is...it can be relentless, but we must choose to go thru it and remember that healing, surviving and thriving are the goals.

Tell me about re-entry...what does it mean....for a bereaved parent it is baby steps back into life again....for a lot of us, it's just getting out of bed in the morning or cooking a meal; a smile or maybe even laughter. Tell me about reinvestment... doing something that will give me or someone else some satisfaction at the end of the day. Something that will give meaning to the meaningless. And last....dare me to dream again so that when I'm ready, I will look beyond today, beyond the pain, and into the future and although my son Robert will not be physically walking with me, he will be walking with me in my heart.

--By Barbara Parsons, Sugar Hill, GA

The challenge is to engage in life again with renewed energy and embrace the new days with a gentle, welcoming spirit  
--Molly Fumia, *Safe Passage*

## Silent Child

My silent child  
 Our precious baby,  
 Close to my heart  
 I'll keep you with me.  
 An important job  
 God has for you,  
 There is love to give,  
 And work to do.  
 He needs an angel  
 Strong but small,  
 To shine light on many  
 And give love to all.  
 Before you go  
 I give you this,  
 Half my heart  
 And one last kiss.  
 We'll miss you dearly  
 That we know,  
 But by God you were chosen,  
 So to heaven, you must go.  
 -- Kelly Lancor



## Newly Bereaved...

### Grief and the Healing Process

When a child dies, no matter what their age or the cause of death, grief lasts far longer than society in general recognizes. The death of your child is an unacceptable tragedy and it can take a long time before you regain any sense of normality in your life.

Grieving is hard work, you will be experiencing emotions on a deeper level than you have ever done before. You will feel more physically tired than usual. You may feel helpless, hopeless, and unable to concentrate or handle your usual day to day routine. Loss of appetite and sleeplessness can make this worse, leaving you feeling out of control and confused. These are all normal reactions to grief.

Crying is an acceptable and healthy expression of grief for ALL family members and helps to release built up tensions. Tears do help in the healing process. The amount of tears, however, is not the measure of the depth of love.

### GUILT

Guilt is a normal part of grief, surfacing in thoughts and feelings of 'if only'. In order to resolve

this guilt try to express and share these feelings and learn to forgive yourself.

### ANGER

Anger is another common grief reaction, anger at professionals, life, God and even your child. Like any other emotion anger needs to be expressed and shared in a healthy acceptable manner. Talking these feelings over with a trusted person can help.

### RELATIONSHIPS

Family relationships are changed by the death of a child. Each person grieves in their own way and in their own time. Be sensitive to the fact that your partner may grieve in a different way to you. Some people grieve openly, others privately and alone. Surviving brothers and sisters may also withdraw or show aggressive behavior. Their school work may suffer from an inability to concentrate. Be as patient and loving as you can.

### SPIRITUAL MATTERS

After a child's death, parents often challenge and examine their faith or philosophy of life. Some people find their faith helps them to accept the unacceptable, others do not. Try to find a caring non-judgmental member of your faith to discuss this with.

### COUNSELING

A parent may feel they have nothing to live for and many think about release from the intense pain. Be assured that parents often feel this way, but in time the intense pain does lessen and a sense of purpose and meaning does return. Talk to someone you trust, and if these feelings persist you may find professional counseling helpful.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

Avoid hasty decisions. During the early months of grieving it would be unwise to make any major irreversible decisions such as moving to another house, changing your job or dealing with your child's belongings.

Take time to consider how you may feel later about this decision. Allow your family and friends to help. Most people are unsure of what is helpful and may need you to take the initiative and tell them what you want. Give them the opportunity to get close and be of help if they wish to.

While it is normal to feel afraid for the safety of other family members, especially surviving children, try to minimize the desire to over protect them. Allow time to feel sad and reflective. Medication is best taken sparingly and only under the management of your doctor. Special days,

such as birthdays, anniversaries, family days, can be very difficult. Often the lead up to these days can be worse than the day itself. It is helpful to plan new rituals and ways to remember your child on these 'special' days.

You, your family and friends can support each other by talking about your child, help, sharing memories and feelings in an open non-judgmental way.

It may be helpful to keep a journal and write about your feelings and thoughts, write a letter to your child who has died.

It is important to take care of yourself. Grief work is the hardest work you will ever do.

Take time for things that may help you relieve some of the stress in your life. Many people find gardening or walking a great help, other suggestions include meditation, swimming, massage etc. Find something that suits you.

Attending a grief support group can be helpful. You will meet others who understand. As you tell your story you will share an understanding of the heart that goes deeper than words. Their survival is reassuring proof that you too will survive.

Remember that, as long as it harms neither yourself nor others, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, no timetable for grief. We are unique individuals and we express our love and our pain uniquely.

Above all, give yourself time. It takes time to open your heart and mind to healing; to choose to survive.

--Author unknown

## Seasoned Grievers...

### Change and Challenge

As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the "old us" too, and their comments show it: "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" or, "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar who shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our

child dies. We wonder, our families wonder, our friends wonder—when will they come out of it? Will they make it through the long sleep? What hues will show when they emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of a cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy—but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the "new us." When our priorities become different and people become more important than things—when we grasp a hand that reaches out, and reach in turn to pull another from his own cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge. Then we can proudly say, "I have survived against overwhelming odds. Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and challenges give me hope that I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again."

--TCF Appleton, Wisconsin

## For Friends & Family...



### Tread Gently

Tread gently near the tender souls who've lost a child,  
Whose hearts are bruised and bleeding;  
For healing comes slowly  
With pain in every forward step,  
tears in every backward look.

So much love still flows for that special one—  
Arms reach out to hold and back to cling,  
But reach forward only numbly,  
Fearful of forgetting or being disloyal by going on.

There is guilt in laughing, feeling pleasure, even being alive.  
There are questions, longings, heartaches.  
But slowly, surely, strength and healing come, in God's own time-

Not as answer, nor as forgetting,  
But as acceptance that this pain,  
This loss, is ours to live with and somehow,  
By God's grace to use to bless.  
--Jean Spleftstoesser, TCF, Pike's Peak, CO



## Helpful Hint...



Survive this. And eventually maybe even thrive again. At times it will feel virtually impossible. You'll wonder how a human being can survive such pain. You'll learn you know how to defy the impossible. You did it from the moment your child's heart stopped, and yours kept beating. You do it with every breath and step you take. You're doing it now. And now. And now."  
 -- Angela Miller, <https://abedformyheart.com/>

## Welcome...



Make No mistake, we do not meet just to cry our own tears and tell the story of our pain. We come together to learn how to bring new meaning and life from the ashes of our lives. We welcome you to join us as together we share and support each other in our grief.

## Book In Review...



*Sugar Cookies and a Nightmare: How My Daughter's Death Taught Me the Meaning of Life* by Carol Kearns. When her 7-year-old daughter was swept out to sea by a rogue wave in 1976, Carol Kearns thought she would lose her sanity. Trying to be strong for her 9-year-old son, she met with the late Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who taught Carol a new concept called "grief therapy" and encouraged her to become a psychologist in her own right. In this uplifting memoir, Carol recalls her 24 years as a grief specialist, corrects a misguided radio host she calls "Dr. Expert" and reveals her own battle with post-traumatic stress disorder after her son, a naval flight surgeon, was deployed to Iraq. (In our chapter's library)

## The Hawk

The air is warm beneath my wings  
 As I glide in the air for things, I see  
 A wooden cross, a family brings  
 Placed carefully here, oh the memories.  
 I hear them talk, they named this place  
 The tears they fall and sunset brings  
 The heavy heart I feel the pain  
 Of a child now resting here.  
 The deer in sunset visit the site,  
 The sun it rises and shines real bright  
 I can't read the markings on the cross  
 But know the pain of a young life lost.

I land in a tree over their heads  
 As they talk of the life this young one led  
 His love for hiking and my native lands  
 And all their dreams for him they had.  
 On this mountain, the stories linger  
 In the blowing wind his warmth is felt  
 For this young man gone before his time  
 Now lives with me on this countryside.  
 --By Lydia Burns, TCF Atlanta

## Making Progress

The day you died,  
 my spirit sought to turn away from life;  
 It could not face the pain  
 that pierced its being like a knife.  
 I wanted to go with you.  
 Why should my life go on?  
 I found no earthly reason  
 to arise and greet the dawn.  
 I could not find a purpose;  
 How pointless it all seemed.  
 Reality seemed distant.  
 Was my life a bitter dream?  
 I seemed to be suspended  
 in a tiny piece of time;  
 Simply going through the motions  
 like an actor or a mine.  
 Then, bit by bit, as I endured  
 each never-ending day,  
 I learned to smile and laugh again  
 in a tenuous kind of way.  
 And now, although I miss you more  
 than any words could tell,  
 No longer am I mired in  
 a brutal, needless hell.  
 I know I cannot escape  
 my sadness and my pain.  
 But I need not give it power  
 to dominate again.  
 Once again I notice rainbows,  
 the stars adrift in space,  
 a flower's perfumed beauty,  
 and the sunshine on my face.  
 I need not search so desperately  
 to find some subtle meaning,  
 some purpose in the hours enclosed  
 between daybreak and evening.  
 I find delight recaptured  
 in hearing, touching, seeing;  
 Once more I've come to know  
 the peaceful joy of being.  
 --Peggy Kociscin, Albuquerque, NM

**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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steven Thomas Pack  
Born: 8/91 Died: 3/20  
Parents: Tom & Lisa Pack

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 Puliselich  
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18  
Mother: Maria Puliselich  
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





## Our Children Remembered



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

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.)

### A Birthday Tribute To Alex J. Mantyla Mar. 1989 - Aug. 2008



Happy Birthday, Alex! It's hard to believe you would be 34 this year. We miss you every day but are grateful for all the memories we shared with you. They always make us smile. Sometimes they can still break our hearts a little.

The memories of birthdays, holidays and our travel adventures are unforgettable, but it's the memories of our little daily adventures that we love the most. For example, I remember 5-25-92, the first time we measured your

height on the edge of the laundry room door. You stood very straight as Dad marked the door. Your smile was so big when you realized you measured 3 feet and 3 inches and you were 3 years old.

As the years passed, that line on the door kept moving up. The last time we measured, you were 19 years old, 16 years from the first time! I think you did it just to humor me, though I noticed you checked out your progress from the year before. That was on 5-13-08. You measured 6 feet even.

If we ever sell this house, the realtor will have to explain to the new owners why a door is missing in the laundry room.



## For Siblings...

### A Wish

I wish upon a rainbow  
In every single dream,  
And hope with my entire heart  
You will be here again.  
I wish upon its colors  
That together we will be,  
For you are my brother  
And I want you here with me.  
It's the way the color blends  
That gets in hopes so high.  
I know you didn't mean it  
When you left without a good-bye.  
We didn't understand your feelings  
Or how sad you were inside.  
You drank until it killed you  
And your friend right by your side.  
If only the world could be a rainbow  
Maybe they would see,  
But even though you're gone  
You're forever a part of me.  
--Chasitie Sharp, Marion, OH

## More On Surviving Siblings

I gained a greater understanding of how powerful guilt can be for surviving siblings observing my son

Michel after the death of his sister, Kristen. As parents, it is our role to support, nurture, and protect. This is not the role of siblings, yet it gets twisted into their grief as well. As a result, it is common for brothers and sisters to feel that they failed in some way.

Siblings may often believe there must have been something they could have done to prevent the death. And sadly, it is not uncommon for siblings to believe they caused the death by wishing ill thoughts on their sister or brother during a disagreement or fight. This can have unfortunate repercussions if the sibling dies. Well-intentioned people may add to the confusion by making statements like, "You need to be strong for your parents." adding an unnecessary burden for the child to now care for us. Michel also heard, "God must have needed Krissie." causing him to fear that God may want him too.

Survival guilt is also common. Not only do parents believe they shouldn't outlive their children, but brothers and sisters often feel guilty for being alive and enjoying life. They may believe as well that they need to be the perfect child to make up for the loss. This is a real complication of grief. As parents, we need to be aware of this and reassure them that they don't need to make up for anything, nor can they. We might want to tell them that the greatest gift they can give us is to be their own person and live life to the fullest.

When death lands on the doorstep of our surviving children at a tender age it most likely becomes their threshold into adulthood for understanding death can demand adult sized answers. I definitely noticed this with my son who was only nine when his sister died suddenly. He became a quieter, more serious boy. The innocence of his childhood was left behind when he realized his sister, his buddy, was gone forever.

Watching our surviving children come to terms with death of this magnitude, I've always felt, is the double-edged sword of the bereaved parent. We are wrestling with our own grief and the endless questions with answers that don't come easily, making us, once again, feel as helpless as we did when our child died. Being open and honest with our children and their struggle and keeping the channels of communication open, can actually bring us closer to them. We can heal together.  
--Carol Kearns, PhD TCF Marin County, CA

## For Grandparents...



### How to Support Someone Who is Coping with the Loss of a Grandchild

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

1. Avoid clichés: Words, particularly clichés, can be extremely painful for a grieving grandparent because they diminish the very real and very painful loss of a unique child.
2. Be aware of holidays and other significant days: Visit the grandparent, write a note or simply give them a quick phone call during these times. Your ongoing support will be appreciated and healing.
3. Be compassionate: Give the grandparent permission to express their feelings without fear of criticism. Don't instruct, or set expectations about how they should respond. Never say, "I know how you feel." You don't.
4. Listen with your heart: Listen attentively and try to understand. Don't worry so much about what you will say, rather concentrate on the words that are being shared with you.
5. Offer practical help: Preparing food and washing clothes are just a few of the practical ways of showing you care.

Whether you are coping with the loss of a grandchild or supporting someone who is, always be kind and don't assume unrealistic expectations. There is no time line for how long grief should last. Take a one-day-at-a-time approach. After all, "grief is not an enemy to be vanquished, but a necessity to be experienced as a result of having loved."

—San Diego TCF newsletter

## From Our Members...



### Fairness

It is not about what is fair,  
lots of people have pain,  
and suffering, and hurt in their lives.  
They work through it,  
they carry on,  
they find a place to put the pain,  
Those people,  
I am one of them,  
I am a part of a group, a sad group,  
a group of people that are living and surviving by

sheer willpower.  
 We go through our days as if we are ok, but we  
 really aren't,  
 we are crying inside,  
 we are far away,  
 we are trying to make sense of our lives.  
 It is not fair,  
 nothing is fair, but we go on, for them,  
 for the part of us that is gone,  
 we are part of a group,  
 you know us,  
 our eyes lack the sparkle,  
 are smile is not as big,  
 we walk among you,  
 though separate from you,  
 in our own world, nothing is fair.  
 –Nancy Juraka, TCF South Bay/L.A., CA

### The Compassionate Friends National Conference for 2023...

#### SAVE THE DATE



Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Denver, Colorado, during the weekend of July 7-9, 2023.

The following article helps you understand what to expect and some of the benefits, healing experiences, and “why” we should attend the National Conference. Registration and hotel accommodations will be available soon. Take time to consider how you and your family could benefit from attending.

### The Gift of Being Alison’s Mom Again – Discovered at the TCF National Conference

My husband and I lost our beautiful daughter in

December 2003. I had only attended two TCF monthly meetings prior to traveling in July 2004 to TCF’s National Conference in Hollywood, CA. I wanted and needed to hear the words and experiences of others to try and integrate all the feelings and emotions I was experiencing, and expected to have in the future. The first evening, I went to a sharing session and came away a bit concerned that the entire weekend would be focused on my experience, but that was not to be.

On the first morning of scheduled events, they held an orientation for new attendees. I thought how brave everyone was to stand up and share with the room. From the first moment I was in the public areas, I began to make new friends. People were anxious to tell their story, talk about their child, share their experiences, offer advice (some good, some not so great), and ask about Alison. By the end of the second night I had a strange feeling that I couldn't name yet.

One piece of advice that I heard over and over was that the second year of grief is harder than the first, but in a different way. I have so many questions about our daughter's death and began to discover that almost every one of the 1,200 attendees had similar unanswered questions. I came to understand why, 10-15 years after their child's death, some parents still came to TCF. I got it! One woman told me that this is her annual vacation with her dead child. Three days every year she got to be Mom again, and to talk with no fear of odd looks or rolled eyes when she spoke with pride of her daughter's accomplishments.

I walked around with my “Alison” buttons on. I attended many workshops — each one as professional and insightful as the last. One was about helping your friends and family help you. Another was understanding how men grieve. Yet another was called “Now Childless.” For the first time since Alison's death, I was told reassuringly that I was still a parent. I could have bought a second suitcase for all the books I bought to share with my husband.

We were assigned tables for group meals and came to know some of the speakers and many other parents. I'm sure I didn't do everything or check out every bulletin board or sign-up sheet, but I'll save that for next year. I laughed, I cried, I learned. When I awoke Sunday morning, I was able to put a name to that “funny” feeling I had. It was “normal.” For the first time in eight months, I felt normal. The meeting ended. I said goodbye to



my new friends. I was not looking forward to taking my photo button off, but I did. In the shuttle to the airport I sat with Mitch Carmody from Hastings, MN. Mitch conducted a couple of workshops and had written a book called "Letters to My Son." We checked in together, ate together and he introduced me to other Minnesota TCF members while waiting in the airport. When we got on the aircraft, there was a family who wanted to sit together, so Mitch gave up his seat and sat next to me. We laughed, we cried, and had a great trip home.

When I got up Monday, I was feeling about as low as I had since Alison's death. Tuesday wasn't much better. By Wednesday, I began to feel better. Maybe my mind and body were trying to integrate all the things I had seen, learned and felt, which is why I wanted to go in the first place. Now, six weeks later, I can feel that I have turned a corner in my grief. I still have bad days. I still feel lost. I still bargain with God for five more minutes. I still don't know what other detours this journey has in store for me, but I really believe that those three days gave me a different perspective. Those three days let me be Alison's Mom again.

I love you, Alison! Love, Mom  
--Shirley Doering, TCF Minneapolis MN

**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 if you include your name. 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	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofselfharm.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)	

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

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

**CHAPTER OFFICERS:**

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

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

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

**National Office Information:**

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

**The 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 Jason Christopher, April 1986 - November 2020. In memory of a special young man who will never be forgotten and who is remembered with love always.

Mom & Dad

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

Love Mom

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

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

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Death date \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_

Tribute \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

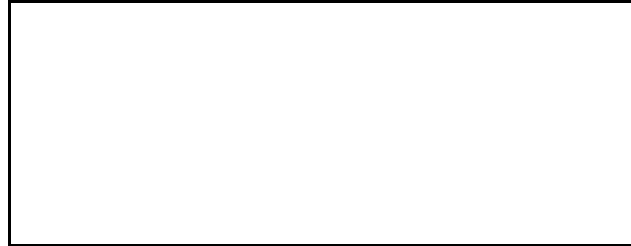
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–Return Service Requested–



March 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.