



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

April 2023 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be April 6th, the first Thursday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

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

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

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

The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...

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

The Thursday, April 6th meeting will start with
"Spring Brings Changes In Our Grief.."

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

The TCF Friends group takes place at Hoff's Hut's outdoor patio dining area (Crenshaw & 237th St in Torrance) at 1 PM. every Friday. All are invited. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for the reservation.

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The Thursday, April 6th meeting will start with “Spring Brings Changes In Our Grief.” Spring is almost here. We may notice that we feel and act differently as we acknowledge that grief feels lighter as springtime activities and holidays arrive. For many bereaved parents the warming days and hope for the future begin to emerge within ourselves. This meeting will start with sharing how changes in our thinking can offer new hope, new wonders, and a new perspective to our Spring.

The Seasons Of Grief: Winter To Spring

There are daffodils in the yard. How did spring sneak in so stealthily? I'm not ready. Winter fit my mood, my grief. Now there are flowers in the yard and a garden to tend. Things are growing. Life marches forward, even when we aren't ready. Spring reminds me of this.

When grief hits it's like a winter of the soul. Parts of us freeze in time. Not dead, but dormant. Pain blankets our emotional landscape like a fresh snow. It smothers greenery and muffles sound. Parts of us peek out, foraging to survive. It's a state of emotional survival. Oddly, at some point, there is comfort in not having to grow, expand, or reach for the sun.

The expectations of myself were few in that season. But now there are flowers in the yard.... I don't feel ready, but it's time to step into the sun. I'm not fully healed. Actually, I'm not certain that's possible. But it's been long enough and life is moving forward. My kids are growing older, friends need me....I need me. It's time to plan for the future again, not just survive the day. Within me are gifts and talents to share and give back to the world.

By stepping back out into the sun I'll be able to fulfill my mission, purpose and dreams. Love means wanting the best for each other. Whether it's your child, parent, grandparents, sibling, husband, or wife, we seek to lift up our beloved and give them happiness. That's simply the nature of true, healthy, love. If something were to happen to you, wouldn't you want your loved ones to live a life of fulfillment and joy? Our lost loved ones want that for us too. They want us to be happy and even find new love. We honor them by rejoining life and growing again.

Life is a cycle. It doesn't reach a set point and

stop, even when something horrible happens. New days dawn and seasons pass, both on the calendar and in our soul. As they do, healing continues, but in a new way, one that includes personal growth and respecting the wishes our loved ones had for us.

Looking out at the bright day and daffodils I know it's time to accept spring. My winter of grief served its purpose. Stepping outside I lift my face to the sun and feel both warmth and tears.

--by Kristen Lamb, BP/USA Northern VA Chapter



A Different Easter

Easter bunnies, brand new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets, the start of spring. How exciting is this time of the year? A new beginning, everything so fresh, so invigorating! But, unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life. Spring is here and the world appears ready to bloom again with new life, new home, and new wonders.

How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go when one of us is missing, no longer able to share this "newness" of life? It seems so unfair! And yet, out of our "darkness" comes the first signs of hope—a "bud" of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

The Easter season usually represents rebirth; let this season be the "birth" of your finding your way back to life again, of finding the ability to heal, and of being able to resolve your grief so that hope and comfort are once again in your life. Let this time of the year show you that you CAN make it through this deepest, most difficult, and sorrowful time of your lives.

-- Christ Gilbert, TCF, Tampa, FL

Grieving Couples

In any relationship, we care for and support each other, but when a child dies the grief is so overwhelming that fathers and mothers are often unable to help each other. Though both parents are bereaved, they may express their grief so differently that many couples fear that their relationship is falling apart. Many women cry

frequently and are able to talk openly about their pain, whereas most men have absorbed the message from family or society that "big boys don't cry"; tears are only permissible for a short time after the death. While some fathers do cry with other people, quite a number cry in private; consequently their tears are not known, and the myth that men don't cry is perpetuated.

Most men find it difficult to talk about their pain, and this suppression of grief can cause a man to appear cold, irritable, angry or depressed. Some men avoid going home after work because their going home to the mother who usually wants to talk about her or their grief or that of the surviving children- is just too much to bear. This attitude can make many wives and mothers feel that the husband "does not care"; "did not love the child as much", etc.

Guilt and anger are experienced over some or all of these things, and the anger can often be directed at each other as the most convenient targets. Because all the feelings are so intense, and because the couple naturally are unable to step back and see what is happening, marriages and relationships can flounder and break up, leaving both partners with yet another loss to bear.

Grieving is an individual process and your partner may not be able to give you all the help you need. This can increase your sorrow and misery, and may turn to anger and bitterness. If, prior to the child's death there were problems in the marriage, this tragedy can cause them to recur.

Sexual intercourse may become an area of contention. For many men, the sexual act satisfies the feeling of being needed, gives comfort and releases tension, as well as being an expression of love. For mothers, the pleasure of the act and the association of love-making with child-bearing can cause feelings of guilt after the death of their child. A woman usually needs to feel relaxed to be able to participate in the sexual act, but this is difficult to achieve because of the stress and tension in grief. Even in relationships that were 'problem free' before the child died, sexual relationships can take a very long time to resume. We should not expect too much of each other.

Surviving brothers and sisters may be difficult or unmanageable because of their grief and the struggle to find their place in the restructured family. This could be a source of strain for the parents; each may think differently about the way

the behavior should be handled, and this can cause friction. Alternatively they may feel so overwhelmed by the whole situation that they are unable to cope with the difficulties.

An understanding of the situation is the first step towards saving and strengthening a relationship or marriage. Some of the following suggestions may be helpful:

- * Talk to each other, although this can be difficult at first, it gets easier and is very rewarding ultimately.

- * Be patient with yourself and with each other. Recognize that it is normal and natural to grieve in different ways and at different paces.

- * Be aware of each other's mood swings, they may not coincide. Be understanding of each other's needs for time and privacy to grieve individually, and also for time together without the other children.

- * Share household chores and support each other through bad patches and 'blue days'.

- * Try to understand and discuss how to handle the surviving children's grief.

- * Talk together, and with them, about how they are coping; discussing what you will do with the dead child's clothes, books, sport equipment, bedroom.

- * Seek help from others as and when necessary. The TCF Library has books which may be helpful in this situation.

- * Try to be affectionate with each other, to stay in touch physically; hugging and touching are important.

- * Help each other towards enjoying life again, try to laugh together as well as cry. Look for outings, hobbies, activities to do together and as a family.

- * The need to recall and reminisce from time to time about the child who has died always remains, and the person with whom this can be most fully shared is the other parent. Even so, there is a need to realize that life does exist beyond the death of the beloved child. As important as this daughter or son is, and as much as you feel the agony of her or his death, your relationship involves more than this child.

- * Your husband, wife or partner need not be the only source of healing. Contact with other bereaved parents through The Compassionate Friends can be very supportive; it helps a lot to realize that other couples are going through very similar experiences. New and lasting friendships are made because of shared grief. This is an



unexpected aspect of TCF, which has spread all over the world.

--The Compassionate Friends Sydney Australia

Exercise For The Soul

At my first support group meeting the facilitator suggested I try at least three meetings before deciding if a support group was for me. They work for some and not for others and that I might actually feel worse after the first meeting, but give it three meetings before I decide. The part about feeling worse sounded odd, but I allowed the three meeting advice into me because I assumed he knew more about this process than I did. He could actually put a few sentences together that made sense. I was still having trouble with that.

At the first meeting not too much was making sense and I didn't know what was going to work. All I knew was that I needed something to help my pain. "Okay," I thought, "let's get through the next minute and then the next one after that and this meeting will end and if somehow I make it to the day before the second meeting I'll decide what to do at that point."

The day before the second meeting came and I remembered that yes, I had felt worse at the end of that first meeting. I'd felt beaten up and beaten down, but I trusted the facilitator and I went to the second meeting.

That meeting was a little better and the third was even better and by that time I was hooked. I was a support group junkie. I found it worked for me in many large and small ways. I felt comfortable in the group setting knowing I could express myself in any way I wanted, knowing I would not be judged or "shoulded" on. Express myself I did.

Those first few meetings are a bit hazy, but I remember anger, tears, yelling and pounding the table. I was a scary guy, but every time I let out my pain, I let healing in. Now many years down the road I'm grateful for the "three meeting" advice.

Through the years I've tried to think of an analogy that would help describe how important it is to keep coming back to those meetings. When you're at your first meeting and someone's asking you to come to the third meeting, it really doesn't make sense. It feels too far away. Here's the analogy I've come up with. Joining a support group is like starting an exercise program after many years on the couch. Make sense? Stay with

me. Just like going to that first meeting is hard, it's also hard to start exercising again. The first workout consists of figuring out what to do and where to start. The weights are dusty, the treadmill is covered with clothes and who the heck knows where the exercise mat is located.

That first meeting may also be hard to start. You'll awkwardly introduce yourself and hear strange things like, "I'm glad you're here," which kind of upsets you because you don't really know what that means. Your clothes will feel heavy, your body will feel awkward, not to mention you've got to figure out a place to sit, who to sit next to and what to say. "Lost" is where you are, but as you look around the room and see parents smiling, laughing and hugging, a little teeny tiny bit of "found" might creep into you. You won't recognize it and it will take a few more meetings before you realize what that means, but it can find its way into you and gently wait for you to find its meaning.

Now back to the exercise analogy. You start your exercise program by doing as little as possible because you don't really want to be doing anything, but deep down you know it's important to your health, so you push on. You may do two sets of five push-ups, ten crunches, hit the treadmill for five minutes and call it quits. That first session will be over and you won't feel very good. Your body will be yelling at

you and the couch will be calling you. Just like your first workout, at your first support group meeting you might not want to do much either. You may do as little as possible and then find your soul is yelling at you and your pain is calling you. Pain you didn't know you had may have come to the surface and it scared you which made you think, "Why should I come back if I feel worse than when I came in?"

The morning after your first workout you throw your legs over the side of the bed and every single muscle in your body is screaming at you. "Oh my gosh," you think, "what did I do to myself? Why should I do that again?" You may feel the same way the day after your first support group meeting.

When you wake up the next morning, tears may run down your cheeks when you think about what happened and you may think, "Oh my gosh, what did I do to myself? Why should I do that again?" You manage to gently but gingerly get back into your workout clothes and head to the basement for another try. After stretching out and again



please,
don't give
up on us.

convincing yourself it's a good thing, you get started. Much to your surprise you're able to add one push-up, one crunch, but decide to stay the same distance on the treadmill because, "Hey, let's not get nuts here." What you find is that you saw progress, you moved forward, got a little stronger and you feel a little better about yourself. "Hey, maybe I should keep coming back," you say.

When the day before the second support group meeting comes you have to decide what to do. Go, not go; go, not go; go, not go? In the back of your mind you keep hearing the facilitator asking you to try three meetings, but you're scared. Just like you know that exercising is good for you, you kind of think going to another meeting will be good for you, so you decide to give the support group another try. When you walk in, the surroundings feel a little more familiar, you get hugs from the same people (and maybe new ones) that you got them from last month and the statement, "I'm glad you're here," makes a little more sense. You may open up just a little bit more, share a little more of your pain and feel just a little bit better at the end of the meeting.

Your second workout comes to mind and you realize that here too you saw progress, you moved forward, got a little stronger and you feel a little better about yourself. But, it still wasn't all that great. It still hurt. You're still sore.

Now onto your third workout and even though you're no tri-athlete, you feel a little less sore, a little stronger and a little more motivated. You may add nothing to your push-ups, crunches and treadmill, but you showed up and got involved; a victory. Things are moving along in little steps, but they're moving along. Your body is less angry and motivation becomes a word that's starting to make sense.

The day before the third support group meeting arrives and even though you're still hesitant because your soul still hurts, the facilitator's advice is now stronger and making more sense. In you go. This time you initiate the greetings and hugs, which kind of surprises you. You find yourself gravitating to certain people and feel comfortable talking with them. You never had that feeling before and are very grateful for their presence. They're probably thinking the same thing about you. The circle of mutual support is beginning to surround you. On the way home from your third meeting you know what the facilitator meant by asking for three meetings and you silently thank

him.

Over the next several months of exercising you get very strong and very healthy. Your attitude is better; your body feels wonderful; no part of it is yelling at you anymore. Instead it's thanking you. You're now highly motivated and look forward to working out. It can be the same for your healing. By this time you've attended eight or nine meetings and can't wait to get to the next one. Even though you don't feel wonderful by any means, you feel better, you continue to move forward and get stronger. Deep down in your soul you think you heard a laugh. It's a distant echo, but you're sure it's what you heard. Just like you've been exercising your body, you've been exercising your soul by attending a support group.

The point of this story is that if you exercise your soul by continuously sharing your story and reaching out for help, you can get stronger, you can get happier and your life can get better. However you exercise your soul is up to you. There are many ways to do it. The important thing is to do it consistently and with as much enthusiasm as you can muster. By working at your grieving and healing, good things can happen. You can one day smile and find meaning in your life again and those are very good things.
-- Rob Anderson

Letters To My Son, Andrew

(A father deals with grief over his son's death by writing letters to the boy.)



You introduce yourself to me, the solitary stranger in the cafeteria. You're just being friendly. In the course of conversation, you ask, "How many children do you have?" And you are slightly disconcerted when I hesitate. Don't I know how many children I have? The answer, when it comes, is a shock. "I have three children, two living and one deceased." And now what do you say? This is your unspoken question; I hear it in your uncomfortable shifting in your seat and the disappearance of your smile.

My 8-year-old son, Andrew, was hit by an SUV and killed in May of 1988. And the not-so-subtle message from our society to those of us who are grieving is, "Just get over it. It doesn't do any good to dwell on the past. I wish you live in the present." But we are changed forever by those we love in life and equally by their passing. And so, it has not, in

fact, been a long time since Andrew died.

The experience of that day 28 years ago lives timelessly in my heart. From then on, I was left to try to make sense of what defied reason, to accept what was unacceptable. Part of me knew that Andrew was gone, and yet another part reeled in disbelief—and still does. I often feel that I stand with one foot in each of two worlds, this living reality and then unknown beyond, mourning for two: Andrew and myself.

To avoid total emotional isolation, I sought companionship from trusted friends and group support from others who suffered losses. I learned that shared tears are far less salty than solitary ones and that open expression lessens the pain of grief. In telling our stories, we learned that we have more in common than we have differences. And, perhaps, most of all, we learned that we are not alone. I listened to others' stories, and I learned to care again—to allow someone new a place in my still fearful heart. And I learned what truly endures in this uncertain existence: "It is a glimpse of play out an open window, a knowing smile at bedtime, a sleepy head resting on a shoulder, a sigh of contentment, a cheerful wave hello. It is a moment of warmth, a secret shared breathlessly, a casual glance that says nothing in particular, but says all. It is a quick impression, a flash of pride, a stolen hug, a silent tear. It is a thousand such moments, each of them a heartbeat, all of them a lifetime. It is what we were to each other. It is what we are to each other. It is all that happened. It is all that didn't."

I wrote those words to my son in one of many letters meant to keep our relationship alive and to help find myself again. Those letters have now been published as a book called "Dear Andrew" Over the years, I have evolved so that my grief is no longer as raw as it once was. Rather, it has settled like a fluid in every cell in my body, and seeks balance with my every thought and movement. "I'm all right now," I wrote Andrew. Perhaps this is what it means to heal.

Still, your cafeteria question is not simple. Grief is not simple.

--By Robert Gloor

My Champion Me – Let's Talk Self Compassion



On Tuesday 16th February TCF members assembled via Zoom to hear Sangeeta Mahajan's

second talk about her personal journey of grief: My Champion, Me. Let's Talk Self-Compassion. As in her first talk, her amazing serenity and calm wisdom were instantly evident. How can it be only six years since she lost her beloved 20 year old son Saagar to suicide?

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

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

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

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

peace.

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

Self-kindness

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

Common Humanity

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

Mindfulness

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

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

fights for their cause, and this is what we should do for ourselves while connecting with others. She gave the analogy of a strong enduring tree outside her window, always present in all weathers, surrounded by different people and animals, ever connected to other trees via a network of underground roots.

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

--Review by Lisa Mayland. You can listen to both Sangeeta's talks hosted by TCF on our YouTube channel at tinyurl.com/r9k5up84

Angel Of My Tears

How do you love a person
Who never got to be?
Or try to envision a face
You never got to see?



How do you mourn the
death of one
Who never got to live?
When there's nothing to feel good about
And nothing to forgive?

I love you, my little baby,
My companion of the night.
Wandering through my lonely hours,
Beautiful and bright.

What does it mean to die before
You ever were born?
To live the lovely night of life
And never see the dawn?

Ah! My little baby,
You lived like anyone!
Life's a burst of joy and pain

And then, like yours, it's done.

I love you, my little baby,
Just as if you'd lived for years.
No more, no less, I think of you,
The angel of my tears.

-- Author Unknown

Newly Bereaved...

The Tasks of Grief

Grieving is the process of adjusting to loss. In our grieving, we have two tasks: to re-form our sense of self without what we lost, and to internalize our relationship with what used to be physically present. When we grieve, we have lost more than a person or a thing; we have lost a part of ourselves. ...

All changes entail a new self-image; a new sense of who one is. [We] internalize what was lost, so that it remains present in our lives, but in a new way.

--Author Unknown

Seasoned Grievers...

"I Can't Do It"

As I was reading an old newsletter, I thought about the words "I can't do it". These were the words I had heard over and over again when I was trying to teach my 8-year-old granddaughter how to ride a bike this past weekend. As she kept telling me "I can't do it", I thought back to a time when I said the same words over and over again.

When my son, Paul died twelve years ago in a car accident, I thought to myself that I simply could not go on in life. While I had a younger son at home and a solid marriage, everything dimmed in my life while comparing it to the death of my son. My mind and body were clouded with constant pain and after making it through the first holidays, birthday and anniversary, I thought to myself, "I can't do it" anymore. Simply put, I didn't think any mother or father could continue on living through this devastating time. I read all the grief books, attended a Baltimore County vehicular and homicide support group, visited therapists, attended counseling sessions through my work and counted on friends and family for their support, but

the words still rung out in my head-- I can't do it anymore.

I honestly thought in the beginning that no one could possibly understand my pain because no one loved a child as much as I had loved my son, but I soon realized I was terribly wrong. After attending the Bereaved Parents support group, I began to see people who were exactly like me. I hated to be part of a group that was full of so much sadness, but I couldn't stay away. Never in my life would I have volunteered to work with a group of bereaved parents unless I had become one myself. Attending these meetings and talking to others very much like myself was where I began my road to recovery.

Everyone has a different timetable for grieving, but for me it was three years to even begin to feel that I could possibly go on with life and not until the fifth year that I decided that I was the only one who could choose happiness for myself. Parents never get over the loss of a child, but they can choose whether or not they want to find happiness once again in their lives. After twelve years I can tell you that I laugh a lot more and especially at myself. I still cry sometimes, but the ravishing pain that constantly attacks you in the beginning has gone. I also can plan ahead and look forward to a new future, where in the beginning I couldn't plan from one moment to the next. My heart and mind continue to miss my son each day, but I am more thankful than ever that I was able to share time on earth with him for those nineteen years.

So if you are newly bereaved, I just want you to remember that "you can do it" even if you think you can't. If you are constantly swimming upstream against the current of grief, allow yourself time to float. In other words, give yourself a break from all the hard work that grief takes out of you. Floating during difficult times can give you an inner peace that is much needed and will allow you time to renew your strength before you have to swim upstream again and face another holiday, birthday, or special occasion without your child. So bless each and every one of those bereaved parents and just remember that "You Can Do It".

--by Debbie Michael, BP/USA Baltimore, MD

Perhaps the Butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness, yet become something beautiful.

-- Author Unknown



For Friends & Family...



Helpful Hint...

Hope For The Moment

There are times when it is hard to believe in the future, when we are temporarily just not brave enough. When this happens, concentrate on the present. Cultivate le petit bonheur (the little happiness) until courage returns. Look forward to the beauty of the next moment, the next hour, the promise of a good meal, sleep, a book, a movie, the likelihood that tonight the stars will shine and tomorrow the sun will shine. Sink roots into the present until the strength grows to think about tomorrow.

-- Ardis Whitman, Reader's Digest

Welcome...



Dwelling on Our Loss

To an outsider, the idea of meeting with a group of people for the purpose of discussing death, our personal experiences with the death of our children, the "grief process," etc., may seem grim if not altogether morbid. All of us who are involved in The Compassionate Friends have run into someone who has asked, "Why do you do this?" or "Why don't you just try to let it go?" The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is always stated with negative connotations yet dwelling on the death of a child is not something we can avoid. Indeed, "dwelling" is part of the healing process. It's how we come to grips with the questions "Why, what if?" that uncontrollably pop up in our minds, and it is how we learn to accept the unacceptable.

Certainly, there is a wealth of information in books dealing with death and dying. Our faith, our pastors, priests, and rabbis have much to contribute to our healing. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapy may be necessary. TCF encourages grieving parents to utilize any or all of the above tools, but we also realize the value of learning to verbalize openly and publicly the grief and the loss we feel, not in the privacy of our doctor or minister's office, where we are very sheltered, but openly among people who know full well how hard it is to say, "My child is dead." We do not put any pressure on people attending our meeting to say anything, but the beautiful part of this group is that it enables you to see people who are "down the road" and to realize that you will be there in time.

Are we dwelling on our loss? Absolutely, but we are learning to dwell on it constructively, to dwell on it without guilt and isolation. We learn how to reach out to others with a compassion that brings healing to others as well as to ourselves.

--Philip Barker, TCF, California

Book In Review...



The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma by Babette Rothschild. I've been reading a book and it's clarifying and articulating things for me. It's a good book about how trauma affects the body, especially for bereaved parents still experiencing illnesses years after their child has died. If you're not working on your grief, your body will...ulcers, colitis, arthritis... anything inflammatory. As one mentor says, "If you don't weep, your body will."

Measure of My Heart

When I first took the measure of my heart,
I could not see, the light was dim.
A friend held the lamp while I looked in.
There was room for someone's sorrow
And another person's pain
And plenty of room for other people's tears,
That fell like rain.
The depth of my compassion everyone could see.
But none of it really mattered until
There was room in my heart
For me.

~ P.G. White Changes magazine



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: 1/22
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

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

Christopher Zuchero
Born: 5/85 - Died: 5/22
Parents: Mike & Shelly Rudeen

* 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 Andrew Sankus April 1971 - Aug. 2015



My son, Andy, passed in August of 2015. He was born in April of 1971. He was awesome and constantly amazed me. I guess the "A's" have it.

His children live thousands of miles away. It has been a challenge to stay connected. Oh, I sent Birthday gifts and Christmas presents; couldn't be sure they received them. I wanted them to know I loved them and was thinking of them even when we weren't together in person. It occurred to me that they probably had all the material things I could

send. The early years were delicate. I want our relationships to be loving, honest, sincere and special.

Then it occurred to me that I could unconditionally reach out to them. I require no response from them. I send texts to my Granddaughter and mail print outs to my Grandson on the day of the month they were born, the 17th for her and the 19th for him, every month. This has been heart warming for me. I always include a quote to remind them that Grammy Loves them. "The Love between a Grandmother and Granddaughter (or Grandson) is Forever". "Grandchildren just make you feel better when you are around them. They are sunshine for your soul and medicine for your mind," "My Grandchildren are: The apple of my eye, the spring in my step, the song in my heart, the warmth in my smile, the sunshine on my face, the frosting on my cake, the rose in my garden, the Light of my life." "To my Grandchild: I loved you yesterday, I love you still, I always have, and I always will." "The Love of Family is Life's greatest Blessing." "I just can't help but smile every time I think about my Grandchildren". This Grammy Loves her Grandkids to infinity and beyond." "My Grandchildren may outgrow my lap, but they will never outgrow my Love." "Grandchildren restore our zest for Life and our faith in humanity."

The lion's share of my messages are inspirations, wisdoms and ideas. This is a chance to pass on thoughts that have served me already like the Four Agreements. It has assuaged my fear of inadvertently saying the obvious wrong thing. I pray before I send them. I have released the worry that I might be misunderstood. As I do my best they get the best of me.

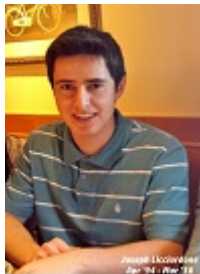
Andy's daughter chose a California college. When she came for orientation I met with her and her Mom. My daughter-in-law referenced ways she is "like her Dad". Since then I feel free to mention him. Maddie came to my daughters nearby home for Thanksgiving this year!! It was always

Andy's favorite holiday.
This month my Grandson is coming with his Mom to see his sister's campus. We will drive the 125 miles to be With them if they don't come here. I have no doubt their Father will be amongst us if only in Spirit.

The years have swiftly passed, the times are evolving and still the vitality he generated continues to live on. That's the way Love is...

Mary Sankos

A Birthday Tribute to Joseph Licciardone April 1994 - March 2016



A Birthday to most, is a day of great cheer. To celebrate their loved one. Not only today, but on this day each year.

You will always be remembered as Brian, Nicole, and Marie's little brother. But to Vincent, you'll be cherished as his youngest, older brother.

This year, in April...2023, you would be turning a year shy of celebrating turning the big thirty...

Your energy and spirit continue to light up the world around us. We love all the signs that you (and the monarchs) bring upon us...

We will try to move on, even though things aren't the same. As a family, or tribe, we will carry out and honor your name.

Joseph, Joey, Joe, you're always so much fun. Can we all just take a moment and appreciate the Cal State Fullerton Underwear Run!!

Yes, that's where it came from, that yummy fireball shot. That has all of our family...Cheers to what we would've never thought.

Our lives are all short and tomorrow is not guaranteed. But if there is one thing you take away, please take it away from me...

I was brought into this world for a reason, and taken away for the same. Please continue to count all of your blessings...each time you say my name...

Forever your guardian angel,
Joseph Emilio Licciardone

--Marie Licciardone, Joseph's Sister



For Siblings...

Memories That Matter

I REMEMBER him when we were kids, dreaming we were riding on Santa's sleigh instead of sitting on a piece of cardboard in the hallway of our house. I REMEMBER climbing the hedges with him, and more than once tumbling to the ground when he gave me a push.

I REMEMBER the trip out West when he renamed our Ford Custom 500 the Stanley Steamer, because it kept

overheating and blowing its top on our way up the Rocky Mountains.

I REMEMBER the security and comfort it gave me knowing he was standing beside me at the front of the sanctuary when we joined a new church.

I REMEMBER him playing a tape of rock music at Papa's house, and Papa saying he liked it. Papa was just being agreeable, I'm sure.

I REMEMBER how sad I was when he went off to college—and how happy I was when I joined him there a couple of years later.

I REMEMBER going with him to a restaurant to examine the fine craftsmanship of the remodeling job he had done on the place.

I REMEMBER how excited I was when he visited me in Washington. We were like kids again; he wanted to see the dinosaur bones in the Smithsonian. We were both amazed at the sight.

There are more than memories. There were times in our lives when the world seemed right. Larry died November 11. Suddenly, the world didn't seem so right anymore.

I've searched for him since then—in the cemetery, in his old room at our parents' house, in photographs, in letters he left behind, in quiet hours at my house.

I've cried, I've prayed, I've laughed. I've gotten angry at the unfairness of it all. It's true that life does go on. And it's just as true that part of you dies with a loved one; certainly part of my life stopped in time with Larry on November 11. Yet even in death, Larry has taught me a few things about life.

It's incredible how insignificant things like ambition, career, and possessions can be at times like these. It's just as stunning how important other things become—faith, love and family. They go hand in hand.

As life goes marching on, I can see Larry in the two-year old daughter he left behind and loved so much. If I listen closely enough, I can still hear him talking to her, babying her.

Larry Mayfield was my brother. I loved him here on earth. And I'll keep looking for him, until I see him again someday.

– By Mark Mayfield – Mark was on the staff of USA Today when this was written. His brother, Larry, was killed in a car accident. Reprinted from Sharing The Journey, newsletter of the Bereaved Parents of Springfield

For Grandparents...



An Open Letter To Grandparents

Dear Grandparents,

We grandparents are put into the unenviable double role with the death of a grandchild. Not only do we lose a grandchild, but we find ourselves in the helpless

position of watching our children grieve the loss of their child.

Several of the challenges with which we are faced as bereaved grandparents include communicating with our children, being a good listener (often very hard for us grandpas), and trying to understand our roles with our children, other family members, and friends as we face being strong for our children yet giving ourselves room for our grieving process.

As grandparents, one of our greatest challenges is asking 'why' did such a tragedy happen to our family. As the family matriarchs and patriarchs, in our minds we are the ones who are supposed to die first. Not our children, and most definitely not our grandchildren. The death of a grandchild goes directly against everything we consider the natural order of our family's life. The natural order is for us as the matriarchs and patriarchs to go first. Yet here we are faced with the reality of a grandchild's death before ours. If you are asking 'why' or more specifically 'why not me' (as I did), you are a normal and loving grandparent.

As grandparents, we also must deal with what I call the double whammy of grief. All our grandchildren are very special to us. Each one is uniquely blessed to touch us in a way no other child does, not even the other grandchildren. My first whammy was the loss of that grandchild's uniqueness in our heart and our life.

My dear BB (our loving nickname for Briellynn Bullard) died within 72 hours of the diagnosis of her cancer. The hole in my life and heart was sudden. BB's uniqueness is gone. That is an emptiness we will never refill. No matter the time it takes, grandma and grandpa, the hole in your heart and life is sudden. Give yourself time to process and grieve in your own way and time.

The second whammy is the grief and helplessness in comforting our children, the parents of our lost grandchild. We as parents have devoted our lives to the comfort and best for our children. Suddenly we are thrust into a position in which we are very unfamiliar. We are helpless in our ability to comfort our children. Stay involved with your children but give them space to grieve in their ways. Process their grief as you process your own.

In our position as leaders of the family, it is important to remember that all family members will grieve differently. We grieve differently than our children (parents) who grieve differently than any siblings (other grandchildren). Remember there are different ways to grieve. Some will grieve by being quiet while others will keep busy occupying themselves with work or hobbies. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Give your family members space and allow various ways of grief.

Always remember there is also no timetable for grief. Some family members will take time, some a very long time. Grief has no timetable. Grandparents, don't try and push your other family members to adhere to your,

or any other's, timetable. Grief does not tell time. Grief does not own a clock or calendar. Grief has no timetable for anyone.

I mentioned this earlier to you but feel it is worth mentioning once again before closing my letter. Be careful you get so concerned and involved in your children's grieving you forget your own grief. This can be especially difficult for grandpas. It definitely was for me. We grandpas want to fix things, especially those of you of my generation. Please don't forget you, grandma and grandpa, need to also grieve. Pay attention to your grief. Have someone, or somewhere, to go with your pain and grief. You must take care of yourself, or you won't be able to take care of others.

As I close, remember you most definitely are not alone. The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is indeed your friend. At TCF you are amongst friends who understand your grief and your pain. If your surviving grandchildren view you as their 'hip' grandma or grandpa, you are probably a techie. You can access the TCF Facebook Group/TCF-Loss of a Grandchild to be with other grandparents experiencing the same grief, pain, and issues that come with being a grieving grandparent.

I am concluding my letter with our Grandparent's Credo. Read it often and remember, you are not walking alone.

Grandparent's Credo

We are the grieving grandparents, shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild. We have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them. When they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. Even though at times we feel powerless to help, we continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Your grieving grandparent friend, David
--David Dieterle, Troy, MI

Prior Conferences...

Excerpts from Inside These Walls: TCF National Conference



Inside these walls, where parents at times catatonically walk, their lives tainted by the sting of death. Mothers, hollow eyes etched with sorrow.

Fathers, whose shoulders' quake attempting to stifle their choking sobs. Brothers and sisters, looking for answers to their emptiness. Grandparents, questioning the broken chain, "Why them and not me?"

Yet...inside these walls, lies a protective and supportive cocoon, part of "The Club" we'd prayed never to belong, where others share our grief and loss, for they also have been there. They say, "I know how you feel" and truly do. Always ready with a reassuring hug given by a stranger, yet not a stranger, for they too have walked in our shoes.

Inside these walls, our children are remembered as paramount in our lives, as they are and should be. And I will return to these walls year after year, taking my precious child with me, as I reach out to those, here for the first time, inside these walls...

The above were my observations looking out my hotel window toward Washington, D.C. while attending the TCF National Conference in Arlington on the 4th of July, 2001. Little did I know that in barely over two months the "pyrotechnics" I spoke of would not be the fireworks I observed that rainy 4th of July evening, but the fire in the sky after a hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon. What was written innocently back then took on new meaning after September 11th; that fateful day thousands around the country would also become members of "The Club" as well.

I have attended the past three National Conferences, first in Portland, then Chicago, and the above last summer. I have met many bereaved parents from all around the country, who, like I, have experienced some incredible "happenings" while there. For example, in Portland, in the Reflecting Room, a quiet place away from the crowds, parents can spend time to peacefully reflect on their child. Somewhere near the end of the first day, I decided to stop there, feeling a need for quiet time. Just as I entered the room, the very first name I heard spoken was "Nina Westmoreland"! I remember gasping...I just couldn't believe that at that exact moment, when I decided to walk into that room, of the 900 names being read, my daughter's name was said!

After I regained my composure, I thought about what had just happened. Previously, I had questioned whether I should have made that trip at all. After all, it was the first trip I had taken since Nina died and I felt apprehensive (it was on that trip that my Nina died) and even guilty about it. But because of what had just happened, I felt that she was making her presence known to me; to tell me that even though I could not see her, she was very much with me in spirit and glad that I had made the trip to the TCF National Conference that year.

I would urge anyone who is able to attend one of the National or Regional TCF Conferences. You will derive much benefit from the many workshops, the inspirational speakers, and, more than anything, being around others who "have walked in our shoes." It is

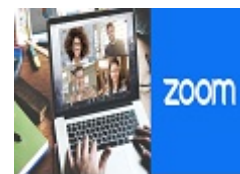


always difficult for me to leave that protective cocoon. There, I didn't have to explain my tears. I could speak of my daughter and others would listen. I felt safe; I felt understood. I promise to keep you apprised of upcoming conferences so that maybe someday you too might experience the peace and acceptance of being "inside these walls."

With gentle thoughts, Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN In Memory of my daughter, Nina

The Compassionate Friends National Conference 2023... 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. Call (877) 969-0010 or Register online at www.compassionatefriends.org

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 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

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: April 1st for May 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 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) 963-4646 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at Lynntcf@aol.com if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

Phone Friends ... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child with someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.



- Connie Licciardone (chapter co-leader)...(310) 292-5381
- Bonnie Mantyla (chapter co-leader).....(310) 530-8489
- Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096
- Linda Zelik.....(310) 370-1645
- Mary Sankus.....(310) 648-4878
- Nancy Garcia (Spanish speaking).....(310) 406-5163

LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS

- Beach Cities/L.A. (Manhattan Bch): (970) 213-6293 Third Tue.
- Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
- Newport Beach (917) 703-3414 3rd Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
- Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.

South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

Local Support Groups...

Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

Alive Alone: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Alivealone.org

Survivors of Suicide: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253

Our House/Bereavement House: Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also Spanish Support Group, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.

Pathways Hospice: Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031

New Hope Grief Support Community:

Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place: Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

Torrance Memorial Bereavement Services: (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

The Lazarus Circle: Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7;15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss: Contact: Megan Heddlesten (800) 821-6819

Walk with Sally: Cancer loss bereavement & art therapy for children- Monica Fyfe (310) 378-5843

Camp Comfort Zone: Year round Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (310) 483-8313.

Other Grief Support Websites...

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.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.

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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



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 Dominique Oliver, May 1985 - March 2002 and Brandon Armstrong, July 1995 - July 1995.

Love Mom

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

**When making a donation, please make checks payable to:
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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.



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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

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

We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

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

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

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

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

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

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