



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

June 2023 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be June 1st 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, June 1st meeting will start with **"Dealing With Upcoming Vacations and Happy Events"**

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. most Fridays. All are invited. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for the reservation.

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

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (310) 530-8489
j.mantyla@att.net
Leo & Connie Licciardone (310) 292-5381
ConnieStar58@gmail.com

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

The Thursday, June 1st meeting will start with “Dealing With Upcoming Vacations and Happy Events” Summer is almost here. June is a very conflicting month for many people, especially the more newly bereaved. What use to be a time to anticipate, can become a distraction from our precarious “new normal” we are trying to build for ourselves. Traditional happenings like Father’s Day, weddings, graduations, family events and vacations can easily take an emotional toll on us. Be especially kind to yourself as you prepare for the array of emotions you will experience. Remember, you will take your grief with you whether it is for a happy occasion or just a break from the every day stresses of life. Upcoming vacations and happy events may make you wonder if you should even attend. After all you don’t want to ruin things for friends and family... Help prepare yourselves for summer with a game plan, an exit strategy and a hand full of tissues. Sad moments will occur, just as happy times can mostly avail if you plan ahead. Remember, the anticipation of the event is often worse than the event itself. Vacations and happy events will continue to occur in your life and your mind set will play a major role in how they turn out. Join us as we share what helps in the first few years after the death of a child.

Can Grievers Take a “Grief-cation”?

Written By Jill S. Cohen, Family Grief Counselor

Is it Right or Wrong For Grievers to Want to “Escape”? If you’re grieving, your first thought might be: How can I possibly even think of going away? After all, I’m mourning the loss of a loved one.

Do these thoughts match your thoughts?:
 Why would I want to be sad somewhere else?
 How could I possibly have a good time?
 What would people think of me if I escape my home and mourn my loss somewhere else?
 Does having fun mean I don’t miss my loved one?

I often suggest to my clients that they can change that thought. Think of it this way: Vacations are not experiences only for the “happy” people. They are for ANYONE who would benefit from a new experience, a change of scenery and a little bit of pampering.

In fact, a vacation may be just what you need – to take a mini- break from grief.

Here’s how GRIEVING and VACATIONING can go hand in hand:

Change Your Surrounding.

It’s okay to grieve in different surroundings. Changing your environment can lift your mood, can refresh you, and can take you out of your “stuck” zone.

New Outlook.

A vacation can give you a fresh outlook on life. It reminds you that there is a whole world happening out there. You’ll see people, who also may have had losses, who are still living and going about their activities in their own way. It can be reassuring that your life can and will resume when you’re ready.

The Scenery.

After all, what can lift a mood better than beautiful scenery? ---from great cathedrals to glaciers, to ocean colors to mountain heights. It’s almost impossible not to “feel” something, in the midst of it all. Allow yourself to forget, if only for a while, your own sadness.

New People.

Imagine talking to people who don’t know your “story” and don’t look at you as if they don’t know what to say. Wouldn’t it be a relief to be anonymous for a week or so?

Grieving Gets Lonely.

When you stay for a prolonged period of time in your grief, you begin to close yourself off in unhealthy ways. The longer it stays that way, the harder it is to re-enter your own life again. Being around others can make you feel that you are part of the world again.

Grieving Can Get Crowded.

Sometimes, it’s just too much to have people around constantly. They are helpful. They keep you company. They try to distract you from your sadness and “make it better”. But sometimes, you just need to be alone or with strangers.

A vacation gives you the time to FEEL, THINK, DISCOVER and MOURN on your own terms. And this is one of the best reasons to go on vacation!



Finding a Little Peace on a Summer Night

While most others love summer for its daytime pleasures, such as beach time, golf, picnics and other

family outings, personally, I like it at night...on my deck after most others have long gone to bed. I gaze at the silhouettes of the trees against a

cloudless sky, with a sliver of moon and glistening stars as a backdrop, and watch the fireflies dance and illuminate the blackness. My senses are heightened as I listen to the tinkle of the wind chimes in the evening breeze, the gentle hum of the overworked air conditioner after a blistering hot day, the hypnotic chorus of crickets, and the mournful wail of a train whistle off in the distance.

There is nothing like fireworks on the 4th of July (or any summer night, for that matter). Despite the noise, something about the “rockets red glare” makes me smile; brings back memories of more innocent times, not only my own childhood 4ths, but my own children at the yearly fireworks displays; the ooohs and aaahs as their eyes lit up at the beautiful sights...in those years long past, when we were a whole family altogether...long before we were...not.

There was a period of time in my life that I felt no pleasure in anything...and never thought I would ever find anything to give me peace ever again. However, the stillness of the evenings now, more often than not, bring a sense of calm and peace to the end of an often-hectic day. As a bereaved mom in the earlier years of my grief journey, I felt more serene in the dark of the night where the realities of life then felt less harsh and glaring. Though sometimes through my tears, depending on the moment, I'd lie on my back and peer into the heavens and attempt to fathom the enormity of the universe—wondering what lies beyond the celestial bodies. And I'd think about Nina...if, in her new life, she now had an up close and personal view of Saturn's rings.

Or was she here beside me one minute with the ability in the next to be perched in the “W” of Cassiopeia, her favorite constellation? Had my precious teenage daughter been to the top of the Eiffel Tower, looking down on Paris as she had dreamed to do one day? Or was my police officer son, Chris, still guarding over the city he patrolled and still watching over it now from a whole different dimension.

I like to believe that they both have and still do, and the tranquility of a summer night gives my body rest, and my mind the opportunity to ponder the wonder of it all and let hopeful thoughts enter in and push aside some of the darker ones. I hope you give yourself the gift of a peaceful summer night—and that you are able to eventually search for and then—in your own time—find comforting and love-filled memories in the experience.

--Cathy Seehuetter

Father's Day

Every father believes in his role as protector of his family. He has been assigned the job of fixer and problem solver. He has been told since his youngest days that he must be strong — must not cry. But each father among us has had to face that point where no amount of fixing, problem solving, and protecting has been able to stop our child's death. And, inside, we must ask ourselves about our failure, and we must face our lack of omnipotence.

Father's Day is often a forgotten holiday, overshadowed by the longer-standing tribute to mothers. But for the bereaved father it is a poignant reminder of bitter sweetness: sweet in the memory of a loved, now lost child; bitter for the death and pain and recognition of the inability to have stopped what happened. Fathers do not often have a chance to share their hurts and concerns. Often they are unable to do so, a remnant of childhood learnings about the strength and stoicism of “big boys.” A father may even be uncomfortable opening up to his wife, and the wife who pushes him to talk may be pushing too hard. Father's Day does not have to be a time when everyone pours out of the woodwork to say, “I'm sorry we haven't talked. Let's do it now.” But it can be a time when the family gives Dad a hug, does something special, helps with the chores and mostly, lets him know how important and needed and loved he is. It is some of these things that he has lost with the death of a child. And, like Mother's Day, the day set aside for fathers does not have to be limited to a Sunday in June. It can be any day and every day. Fathers often show their hurt differently, often internally. But they do hurt.

--Gerry Hunt TCF Upper Valley Chapter, VT



A Bear Hug for Father's Day

As Father's Day approaches, we are reminded of the significant contributions and unique love of fathers, grandfathers and stepfathers. Their defined role, after the death of their children, is to support their wives and surviving children. But their pain is deep.

Men, by their nature and in response to our society's expectations, do not usually grieve as

openly as women. They do not talk as candidly about their loss. They generally do not reach out to others for comfort. They are, after all, the rock, the solid center of the family. Their wife's pain supersedes their pain because women are fragile. Or so we are told.

Yet, as I look into the eyes of so many bereaved fathers, I see a deep, gripping pain. The tears left unshed, the words that are never spoken, the anger, guilt and agony....all remain in the eyes of the bereaved father.

What can a father do? Talk with other bereaved fathers. Read books written by bereaved fathers. Talk with spouses, private counselors and close friends who are not as structured in their "male" societal roles. Try to attend three meetings of Compassionate Friends. You don't have to talk. But you might decide to express a single thought or idea, logically presented, to the small group. You might find peace in this place, and then again, you might not. But, as my own dad often said, "Step up to the plate and see what happens." He was a pretty wise man... a child of the depression, a football player, Greatest Generation, WW II Marine, a fighter, a provider, a protector...a man's man. He endured much in his 78 years, and I only saw him cry a few times.

But when his friend lost a child, my tough dad was the first one to reach out with a bear hug that wouldn't let go until the tears began to flow. They both cried. They both knew that the agony of losing a child was far worse than the horrors of war. Together, they cried.

Happy Father's Day... May your bear hugs be many and your memories become sweeter with each passing year. May your child live forever in your heart so that peace embraces you always.
-- Annette Mennen Baldwin

Planning a Wedding for a Surviving Sibling

Of all of the events we look forward to enjoying with our children, I think weddings have always been pretty high on my list. So many images come to mind: colorful dresses on smiling bridesmaids; pretty bouquets of freshly scented flowers, a radiant bride walking arm in arm down the aisle with her proud dad; a nervous groom in awe of his beautiful bride. New beginnings; sacred moments to be cherished forever; friends and



family gathered to witness and celebrate the union of two lives.

Four years ago we were preparing for the marriage of our younger daughter, Debbie. She was engaged in the fall and was planning for a wedding the following spring. A wedding to plan, so much to do, so much to look forward to – however, for our family this was the beginning of yet another bittersweet time.

Debbie's only sibling, Anna, had died suddenly from brain cancer six years previous. Those were very traumatic, life-changing years for our family and close friends. Every area of our life was touched by the bitter pain that loss brings, as we slowly adjusted to the reality that Anna's earthly presence was no longer with us. There were constant reminders that all the hopes and dreams we had for her had died, as well. Oh, how she loved weddings. She recorded every wedding ceremony broadcast on television. As parents, we grieved that fact that she would never marry. We would never share in the joy of planning and celebrating her wedding day.

In those early years of grief, I felt as if I would never find joy again. I certainly felt that I would never have the energy to help in planning a wedding for her younger sister. The thought of witnessing and celebrating Debbie's marriage only brought pain and tears. My heavy heart was sorrowful and ached over the losses Anna's death brought to her sister. Now the time had come. Debbie was engaged, and we had work to do!

Much to my surprise, the next several weeks and months of planning were the most joyous times I had experienced since Anna's death. As mom and daughter, Debbie and I made many memories together – and Anna was always with us. She was always part of the process.

We would frequently find ourselves remarking, —If Anna were here she would take care of this, or —Anna would not like wearing that dress. It was as though she was guiding our every step.

Including the deceased child in the wedding can be a difficult topic. Most of the moms I have talked with regarding the marriage of a surviving child, express the need to somehow have the deceased sibling remembered in some way. Sometimes the surviving child is afraid to discuss this with the parent, for fear of stirring up emotions.

The bride or groom-to-be need not fear addressing the subject. Most parents have these thoughts right below the surface, and there usually

is much relief when the issues are openly discussed. It could also be the other way around. The parent might be afraid to bring up the subject with the surviving child. Communication is important, so that everyone's feelings can be expressed. Working through these feelings before the wedding will help the actual day to be more of a time of happiness and celebration, rather than sadness and pain.

As Anna's mom, I was relieved, excited and grateful that Debbie wanted to remember her sister on this important day. I can honestly tell you that this did not detract in the least from the happiness and excitement of the wedding day. This was Debbie's day, and my day to be – mother-of-the-bride. There was sadness that Anna was not physically present, but she was there making sure that this was a day filled with joy, love and hope. It was so much fun from beginning to end.

If you are a bereaved parent with a surviving child who is planning a wedding and want to remember someone who has gone too soon, I would like to share some of the ideas that others have used to incorporate the memory of their loved one into the day. When one of Anna's college friends married, she had a floral arrangement around the unity candle that included things that reminded her of deceased loved ones. These persons were listed in the program. She had a purple crayon for Anna. (Anna taught preschool – purple was always a favorite!)

Another of Anna's college friends had a votive holder with five candles that she and the groom lit in memory of loved ones, including Anna. Anna's college roommate had a single candle of remembrance for all her loved ones who had died, and released butterflies following the service.

Our Debbie did not have a maid of honor, only bridesmaids. She asked her only surviving grandfather to step in for her sister to sign the marriage license as a witness. Debbie had a maid-of-honor bouquet made up for Anna, to be placed on her grave.

Debbie's sister and the couple's deceased grandparents were listed in the program under a picture of a butterfly, with the words, "Forever in our hearts." Pictures of these persons were also included on a bulletin board during the reception. Debbie, borrowed the necklace and earrings that

her sister wore to her junior prom. She carried an old hankie that belonged to her grandma, and a piece of her other grandma's wedding dress was sewn onto her tiara.

One couple had a bouquet of white roses, each representing a loved one who had died. Another couple had individual pillar candles on a table with flower rings around them. These were lit before the service began.

At another wedding reception, the bride and groom made a toast to all those loved ones who had died, stating their names, and expressing gratitude for the ways they had touched their lives.

Most importantly, talk about this subject well ahead of time. As a parent, make your needs known. However, respect the desires of the bride and groom. This is their day and their choice. Even if the deceased sibling is not remembered in a tangible way, be assured that she/he continues to live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved her/him.

I add a couple of suggestions for the bereaved. When you are a bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling, weddings can be like a time bomb. Know that this day has the potential for many emotions to surface. It is ok to have a few tears of sadness, as

well as joy – carry tissues! It is also ok to enjoy yourself and have fun – wear comfortable shoes. It is also alright not to join in absolutely everything – know your limits. When your friends ask how they can help, delegate! Save your energy for what is really important. While keeping your deceased child close in your heart, enjoy this time with your surviving child and make some new memories together.

If you feel the need for extra support during your grief journey, attend a meeting of The Compassionate Friends where you will find that you need not walk alone.

Wishing you many warm memories,
Paula Funk, Anna's Mom
--By Paula Funk, Anna's Mom
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, Petoskey, MI

This is a thing many people outside your grief cannot understand: that you have not simply lost one person, at one point in time. You have lost their presence in every aspect of your life. Your future has changed as well as your "now."



I Am Missing the Future Too

When a loved one dies, our lives are altered forever. This includes the future we anticipated. I have been missing the past. Now, I'm missing the future. I'm missing my future with you in it. You

won't be there. You won't be here on your birthday. Or my birthday. You'll be absent at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and every other holiday. Every special day we had will now consist of just me and my memories of you.

I've not only lost you, I've lost the future I was anticipating. Everything is different, and so is the future. I thought I knew what I was doing and where I was going. Now, I'm not so sure. You were in the picture before. Now there is only empty space where you would have been.

Sounds strange to say I need to grieve a lost future. Yet, that's reality. I miss what I had. I miss what I anticipated. I miss you. I know I will somehow make it through this, but I don't like it at all.

When someone leaves us, our world changes, and that includes the future. What we anticipated might be significantly altered. In some cases, what we planned on may be no more. The closer the relationship, the more deeply our lives will be affected going forward. When hit with loss, we not only grieve what we had but also what we will not have in the future.

Unfortunately, along the way we discover other losses that are also connected to our loved one – relationships, activities, holidays, traditions, etc. It's never about just the one loss but includes all the other strands of our life web attached to that person.

People are important. Life is about relationships. When someone we love exits, the future we had envisioned changes. With each holiday or special event, we become hyper-aware of who's missing. Our grief surfaces, and powerful emotions can hijack us at a moment's notice.

Though the future is now different, it can still be good. We can help make it good by taking our hearts seriously and grieving well. Of course, we miss them and wish they were here. Perhaps we can't imagine the road ahead without them. That's okay. The answers we need will come when our hearts are ready for them.

Affirmation: It's hard to imagine a future without you in it. I will focus on grieving well and celebrating you along the way. I don't want to know myself as my struggles. I don't want others to know me as that either. I want them to know me and see a heart that loves deeply and purely, wherever it's at, whatever it's doing, in big ways and small.

I am not the struggles I have faced. I am not a

broken story. I am marked by love, the love I've received from God, the love I have for the ones I hold so close, and the love that I want to wrap the world with. And in that, I am being set free.

You are not the struggles you faced. You are more.

--By Gary Roe,

<https://thegriefftoolbox.com/article/2019-06-06-i-am-missing-future-too>, June 5, 2019

Suicide Loss



Recently, a dear friend of mine lost her son to suicide.

Unfortunately, this brought back memories of the loss of my two sons. The questions were there as my friend cried, "Why?" I couldn't tell her why; all I could say was that she may never know.

Why did my son take his life? Why was his older brother killed at work? These are questions to which I have never found the answers. I don't believe that God is a cruel God so I can't blame Him. Accidents happen, and sometimes surviving siblings take their lives. I was lucky to have my boys as long as I did. I value every memory, every picture.

I don't have the answers, but I do know how to survive. I've found that talking with someone with whom you feel "safe" is a good thing. Writing about my loss has been a tremendous help and I am so grateful for The Compassionate Friends newsletter. In that venue, I felt "safe" in baring my soul. I walked and talked with a dear friend who later told me that he couldn't understand a word I said because I was crying so hard. But you know what? It didn't matter because he listened!

Surviving the loss of a child requires a lot of grief work. I wrote and talked and read until I was exhausted every night. Since there is emotional and physical pain and aching, sleep is so important at this time. Get in the shower and let the rush of water wash away your tears, your aches, the feeling that no one in the world knows how deeply you are hurting. The shower is a "safe" place, where no one hears your sobs, and no one asks questions or tries to express sympathy with words that mean nothing to you right now.

The one thing that is most important in recovery is that you need to feel "safe" whether talking, reading, crying, screaming or sleeping. Talk to that trusted friend. Let the shower wash away your pain. Take care of yourself. Let your caring friends

hug you. Let the reading of other parents' losses make you aware that you are not alone. They've already gone through it and survived. So can you.

I love Life now; I enjoy Life; I appreciate Life so much more. Life is good! "Thank you for filling a place in my life that no one else could."

-- Pam Brown Written with love, in memory of my two sons Jim and Jeff Joan Conley
TCF Kamloops, BC, CA

Sacred Practice: Healing for the Body, Mind, and Spirit



The physical practice of yoga can be great for a grieving body. A gentle practice, like a restorative or "yin" class, does wonders for easing the physical symptoms of grief: tense shoulders, low back pain, a collapsed chest, and tight muscles. Stepping onto a yoga mat can be a physically healing experience for anyone, but especially for a grieving parent.

That's not why I retreated to my mat after my daughter Katherine died at almost 24 weeks in March 2013. My heart was so broken and shattered into such tiny pieces that I hardly noticed the physical pain. The emotional pain was far more intense. There was no balance in my life—everything revolved around Kate. And me. And me not having Kate in my arms.

My yoga mat is a sacred space. It is a space without judgment from others where I can be fully honest with myself and allow my feelings to surface and be felt. It is a place where I can feel my feelings deeply without needing to explain them, justify them, or rationalize them. My mat has soaked up so many tears that it's a wonder it ever dried out.

It is also the place I turn when I can't put a label on what I'm feeling. Those days when I was irritated, angry, annoyed, or just "off" for a reason I couldn't articulate were the days I was most in need of my sanctuary. My yoga practice gave me a place to be quiet and still and allowed me to listen to my inner wisdom. When I can sit with myself in stillness or move hard enough and fast enough to get out of my head, I can tap into my truth. My mat continues to give me a safe place to find answers and to physically work through the things that have no answers. It unites my mind, body, and spirit and continues to help me return balance to my life.

My yoga practice saved me. Showing up and doing the work saved me. Being aware of my feelings, accepting them, and sitting in them saved me. I have so much gratitude for yoga and the people who brought this life-changing practice into my life. My biceps don't look half bad either.

Grief impacts the mind, body, and spirit in intense, profound, and painful ways. Yoga is well suited to deal with grief because it connects the mind, body, and spirit in a deeply personal way. If you've ever thought about trying yoga, I encourage you to do it. If you're hesitant or have questions, I would be honored to guide you. Please connect with me through Sharing Parents or Facebook. Today I dedicate my practice to Katherine Lynn Andrew, born too soon on March 22, 2013. You have been my greatest teacher and I am honored and humbled to be your mommy. Namaste'
-- Amy Andrew

Newly Bereaved...

Practical Ways to Deal with Your Grief

There are no magical methods or definitive answers on how to deal with grief. However, with each other's experience from grief healing, it is possible to help each other in those times when we are having a difficult time. My experience with grief has helped me to assist others throughout the years and I would like to share these thoughts with you.

There are times when you feel lost and alone, but I want to remind you that there are people like me who want to provide support and encouragement, not for financial gain, but a genuine concern because we have experienced what you are going through right now.

Try not to isolate yourself from anyone because if you do, you will face depression, which may get too extreme for you to handle. Seek the company of other family members who share your pain. Sit and talk about your loved one and make sure you include the good memories that will put a smile on your face.

Never give up hope because while there is life there is always hope for your future. Your dreams are still real. You have much to love for in fulfilling your purpose on earth. Be encouraged to know that you are important and there is a reason why you are still alive.

Find something that you can do to uplift someone else or maybe something that your loved one would have liked to do. It will fulfill your day in some way to know that you are reaching out.

Cry if you want to. This is completely reasonable for someone going through the grieving process. It is a way of purging your soul. Never be too hard on yourself and never feel guilty about being happy.

Believe it or not, your loved one would have wanted you to be happy. Do something spontaneous like going on a cruise or going to dinner. It will enlighten you or it may make you feel sad, but you will never know unless you try something.

Every day will be different for you, but hold on to your sanity. You need this to advance into the future. Read books that will motivate and encourage you.

Do not withdraw yourself. I cannot stress this enough. This will sink you into a depression that is hard to shake off.

Write, write, and write some more. Keep a daily journal and jot down your thoughts. Write the good thoughts that you are thinking about your loved one and don't be afraid to journalize your fears. You will have fear of the unknown, but your journey will take you to a place of hope. It is a day-to-day journey and you must travel the road of grief to reach the destination of healing.

Surround yourself with people who are positive and who will understand your pain. Each day, leave the day before behind. Don't retrace your steps. You are on a healing path and looking back is a reason to intensify your pain.

Everyone deals with grief differently, but for the most part, there are some specifics that are universal. I am speaking from the heart of my experiences and hope that the encouragement will lead you to a peaceful place of new beginnings. Don't give up. Keep holding on to each day and be thankful for each new day that you get closing to your healing.

-- Caroline Lawson, bereaved mother

Seasoned Griefers...

Dear Friends,
How well I remember that deep terror and fear that something would happen to my youngest son, after the death of his older brother. I couldn't let him run in the house as I feared he would fall, hit his head

and die.

Whenever he went away boating with his father I feared there would be a car accident or a boating accident. I even went through a stage of having full-blown panic attacks when the school bus was a few minutes late as I was convinced that the bus had crashed.

I was completely over-protective and the fear was something that was obvious even to my son who often commented "you just think something is going to happen and I'm going to die like Ben". How right he was, that was exactly what I was thinking!

Recently my son moved out of home to attend poly-tech in another city. Initially I was beside myself and I wondered how I was ever going to cope with the return of the fear. However as they say, time is a great healer and after the first few days, once I knew he could safely drive to and from course, I settled very quickly. Of course I do worry, but no more than every other parent. This is validation that I have moved on, I have made progress and that the grief and despair can and does lessen.

This knowledge is a big part of what I believe we, as Compassionate Friends, must be sharing with bereaved parents starting on this grief journey. By sharing and talking and writing articles we give hope and support at a time when people are unsure that they will even survive, let alone ever be able to live a normal life again. It may not be the 'old' normal, but it is a life which is well worth living and fighting for.

--Lesley Henderson.

For Friends & Family...

The Storms of Grief

When I grieve in your presence,
I open a window to my soul.
The Turbulence,
The Thrashing,
The Tears,
The bitterness will not destroy me.
Unless they are forced inside.
Help me get the pain out
By being patient,
By showing me with your eyes
That you'll weather the storm.
Please do not say too much,



Just let me be.
 I'll show you the way.
 Then, please feel important
 When I can laugh and play again
 For you are a catalyst
 In my learning to live again.
 -- Elizabeth Farnsworth, TCF, Lynchburg, VA

Helpful Hint...



Life Goes On

When asked, "What is the most important thing you have learned about life?" Robert Frost replied, "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on."

As bereaved parents it is sometimes hard to believe this simple truth:

- ~ When your child dies and life feels like you have been punched with a metal press, life goes on.
- ~ When you cannot get up in the morning because of exhaustion, life goes on.
- ~ When you are not sure what day it is, life goes on.
- ~ When you cry in the cereal aisle, life goes on.
- ~ When friends hide from you, life goes on.
- ~ When your partner does not understand you, life goes on.
- ~ When the boss tells you to pull it together, life goes on.
- ~ When you do not recognize yourself, life goes on.
- ~ BUT, when you get up, get dressed and go to work, life goes on.
- ~ When you realize that love never dies, life goes on.
- ~ When you can laugh even a little, life goes on.
- ~ When hope returns, life goes on.
- ~ When new friends offer a hand, life goes on.
- ~ When a small hand fits into yours, life goes on.
- ~ When people say your child's name, life goes on.

Our children wait for us to realize life goes on. It was meant to go on. It has to go on and so do we.

--Keith Swett, Seymour, WI



Welcome...

Attending your first meeting takes courage. We know this and it is always hard for us to say "welcome" because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you have to attend The Compassionate Friends (TCF) meeting. However,

we are glad you found us. We cannot take away your pain, but we can offer our friendship, compassion, support, and hope. We ask only that you please try to attend **at least three meetings** before you make up your mind, "This isn't for me." With TCF, you'll have a chance to meet others who are making the same journey and you'll discover that special bond that occurs when you are with others who truly understand.

--Kirkland, WA



Book In Review...

For The Love Of Daniel by Ann Goffe. Daniel was a handsome, charismatic bundle of contradictions. Diagnosed with bipolar and anxiety disorders, ADD and alcohol dependency, he became a high school dropout and opiate addict. To the world he was a failure; to his many friends he was a star and a legend. This is an account of his life and his after-life.

Parents

Problems, dilemmas,
 Flat tires, dead lights,
 Father, the fixer,
 Making things right.
 Scraped knees,
 Hurt feelings,
 A painful ordeal,
 Nurturing mother,
 Helping things heal.
 When Death comes calling,
 What will they do
 To cope with disaster
 And get themselves through
 The Hell of their lives
 Going up in smoke,
 And the healer is sick
 And the fixer is broke?

--Richard A. Dew, M. D. TCF Knoxville, TN

"Our heart knows
 there will be no more
 new memories,
 that is why we hold and cherish those we
 have so dearly.

It is the love remembered
 that gives us hope
 in the midst of our sorrow."

--Marie Hofmockel



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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thomas Zachary
Born: 12/85 Died: 7/11
Father: Bob McGaha

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

Michael Jordan Zareski
Born: 5/71 Died: 12/17
Parents: Susan & Norm Zareski

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

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

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

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

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

* 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.

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

Birthday Tributes...



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

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.

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

A Birthday Tribute:

Emily Matilda Kass
June 1995 - March 2006



Emily Matilda,

We love you, we miss you, and you are forever with us each and every day!

As your best friends are making wedding plans, It's hard not to think about the wedding you meticulously planned at the ripe old age of 7! A Beautiful beach-side wedding in Hawaii with a flowing skirt that came off to reveal the top was actually a bathing suit so that you could jump into the waves at the end of the ceremony!

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

If only...

Happy Birthday Sweetie Pie!
All our love forever,
Mom and Jessica

For Siblings...

The Language of Sisters

Posted on April 16th, 2019

I don't expect it's this way with all siblings, but Wendy and I could talk to each other about almost anything. We didn't always agree; in fact, it was often the opposite, but we could communicate in that way I always imagined only certain siblings possibly can – without fear of alienation, without risk. No matter what was said, we would always be connected, and even in the midst of disagreement, we would understand one another.

We could talk about our parents and our shared history, we could talk about our friends, and we could talk about our fears. When she died, I knew I would never have that again.

I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know what I would find. It was summer in Los Angeles and I had agreed to go to a conference. My mom had heard about an organization called Compassionate Friends. "We should check it out," she said, "the conference is in Hollywood. It is 10 minutes from your apartment so I can just come out and stay with you. See if we like it. See if it helps."

It sounded good to me. It was worth a shot; anything was worth a shot. Wendy had been gone for almost four years. I had been thrust into only childhood as a 26 year old. We were finally done with murder trials, the ones responsible, put away for good. The driving purpose we'd had since her murder to see justice served was about a year and a half gone. I didn't have a job or a

direction. I had just turned 30, on the cusp of what was supposed to be the next decade, the next era of my life. I was living in limbo.

The hallways were filled with people. On the first day, I sat by myself in the back of rooms filled with chairs. I sat in circles without talking. I drank too much wine in the lobby bar with my mom. I bid on some things in the silent auction and listened to speakers at a luncheon in the middle of a banquet room on Hollywood Boulevard and thought, this is not my life. In my life, Hollywood Boulevard means a crazy night out with Wendy that ends with her in the back of a tattoo parlor getting a tongue piercing. It means me laughing with her and she sticks her swollen tongue in a cup of ice from the convenience store across the street. That is my life. I don't know what this is.

On the second day, I saw a workshop, "On Becoming an Only Child After the Death of a Sibling." That's me, I thought, starting to wrap my head around my new normal. So I sat in the circle and a girl with impossibly long black hair started to talk about her sister, Emily and how she died in a car accident when she was only 16. How suddenly at 20, her life wasn't the one she recognized anymore. Her name was Kim. She swore and laughed and talked with her hands for the next hour and fifteen minutes. And something clicked. I felt a moment of connection and belonging, found a place free of judgment and fear. Kim and I talked in the hall. I thanked her.

The next summer, the conference was in Boston. This time I met more siblings and Kim was there again. Staying at the hotel and not in my apartment was more inclusive, and so I started to find more connections with brothers and sisters from everywhere. Deep friendships formed, ones that continue to exist outside of the conferences and outside of our shared losses, but the one with Kim was something different. A place I never expected to find.

We spent more time together that year, talked about the challenges of holidays and she invited me to Raleigh for Thanksgiving. That following fall, I just up and went. It was still too hard for me to be home with my own family so I welcomed the invitation to borrow hers.

And we discovered new things. That I was born in April, the same month that Emily died, and that Kim was born in October, the same

month Wendy was killed. Kim and I are six months apart in age and so were our sisters. She was 20 and I was 26 when the deaths happened but we had both been adults, living on our own, albeit in very different ways. These things are all just the uncanny coincidences. The fact that she purses her lips the same way Wendy did when she's thinking. The part where she is so much like Wendy, not just in her features, but in her adventurous and outgoing nature, the part where she tells me as much; as she is wild like Wendy, that I am serious like Emily. These are all certainly remarkable. And maybe these are all parts of the why, but ultimately incidental to the biggest thing.

I have close friends, the ones I've known my whole life, the ones I lived with in LA, went to college with, talk to every single week, see all the time. They are all pieces of my heart, but Kim is a piece of my soul. We don't need to talk every week or even every month. We don't see each other every year, though we are getting better at that again. But I can tell her things that I can't tell anyone else. Can talk to her in ways I

can't talk to anyone else; ways that are only like how I talked to Wendy. It doesn't matter if time has passed; we never have to catch up or reconnect, beyond recapping the facts of any missed time. We don't share the same family, but we share the same pieces of being a family, of losing parts of our family. We don't share the same past, but our pasts are connected. We live lives we once didn't recognize as our own, and somehow, I think, that helps us to recognize one another. Almost from the get-go, we spoke the same language. It's that one of sisters. The one I thought would never exist again. It's not exactly the same, but it's as near as I can imagine something could be. If my thought is this is only something I can talk to Wendy about, I know that means that I can call Kim. It isn't like having Wendy back with me, nor do I imagine that it is like having Emily back for her. But it's a consolation prize like no other. A gift handed over to us from Emily and Wendy. Wherever they are, I imagine them sometimes together, looking on, laughing, and nodding in agreement at their genius.

–Karen Soltero



You Can Survive

I have asked myself that very question over the last few weeks. A friend at work lost her child the week of my brother's anniversary. Even though Sean has been gone for five years, all of those memories came rushing back to me. The pain was once again fresh and new.

I have only attended one young person's funeral since Sean died. My experience at that funeral was awful. I was close to being hysterical through the whole funeral and when it came time to go up to the coffin, I fled the building. I just couldn't look into the eyes of the child's mother and sister and feel that pain all over again. I later apologized to the mother and she understood so well. Now with my friend's child dying, I was beside myself. I didn't know if I could even go to the wake much less the funeral. I had no idea what was about to unfold for me.

My office is a small office, so when we heard about my friend's child dying the impact was felt intensely. My co-workers and I couldn't think or work. We just kept thinking about my friend and her family. One by one people began asking me what they could do for her. I immediately called my mother and the next day everyone had a pamphlet on knowing how to help a grieving co-worker. Then we began talking about how we were feeling. I let them know some things that they might expect, and that if they thought what they were going to say was stupid then to just say they were sorry. We then made plans to attend the wake. I was taking things one step at a time. I went to the wake and when my mother and I arrived, car loads of kids were arriving also. I took a deep breath and in we went. I made it to the coffin. My friend had been taken out just before I arrived, so I talked with her sister. When I looked at her beautiful child all I could think of was why. Why did another young life have to end? Why did another mother have to feel this pain? Why did one more sibling have to feel the way I do? Why did another family have to change forever? I will probably never know the answers to those questions. I know that when I looked into that brother's eyes, I knew that pain. When I hugged my friend, I remembered that numbness. I realized that I will just have to take my experiences and help anyone I can – the kids that go to my group, a co-worker, a perfect stranger. I just know that I feel a need to show people that

life does go on, but in our own time.

--Traci Morlock, Sean's Sister BP/USA, St Louis, MO



For Grandparents...

Is it Time for a New Version of Your Grief Story?

Oprah has one of the top shows on television, but I rarely have time to see it. Last week, however, I watched part of Oprah's interview with Rosie O'Donnell. For decades, Rosie had been portraying herself as a child whose mother died when she was in fifth grade. Rosie's former partner asked her if it was time to tell a different story – the story of a loving mother of four children. Rosie agreed, that time had come.

After the interview I thought about my own story of multiple losses. Would I always be seen as a bereaved person? Could I describe myself in new ways? If so, what would those ways be? I thought about the answers to these questions. Clearly, multiple losses had changed my life and changed me. These losses had been fused into my identity. I will always be a bereaved parent, the mother of a brilliant daughter who died too soon. I will always miss my father-in-law, brother, and former son-in-law. The challenge, at least for me, is to learn from grief and create something positive from its ashes.

You may have come to the same realization. This realization has changed my grief talks. While I still state the facts – four of my loved ones died within nine months – I do it quickly and move on to the purpose of my talk. Similar changes appear in the grief articles I write. When I write an article, I have two goals. One is to inform readers – in other words, to provide a few research findings – and the other is to offer hope. Today, I portray myself as a grandparent raising her twin grandchildren and someone with a new life purpose.

Happiness is a personal decision. Instead of portraying ourselves as life's victims, we can choose to portray ourselves as loving people who are grateful for the miracle of life. The ability to do this comes with time, pain, and grief work.

Your grief story cannot be changed, but the way you tell it can be. You may weave colorful descriptions and happy memories into your story.

Slowly and surely, you may weave humor into your story as well. Telling a different version of your story does not change the facts. A new version of your story, however, makes it more powerful and compelling.

Bereaved people are more than survivors. We are searching beings, grateful for the gift of life. Our stories are worth telling.

--Harriet Hodgson Shared from

<http://opentohope.com>

From Our Members...

Mourning Is My Mode

Today I realized that I have become a shell of the person I once was. What would my child think of this? I am alone, my only child is gone, yet I know he would not be pleased with the way I have isolated myself, wrapped in invisible crepe, sheltered by a mental wall. This is not the mom he knew. I am someone different now. What am I to do with this? I feel like a lonely, mourning swan, swimming endlessly from shore to shore. I have no direction, I want no direction, I just keep moving with no purpose. I must get a grip on myself. I know my motions must take on some meaning. I look to others for help. Yet I realize that if I do not reach out and help myself, I will crash on the rocks with the raging tide.

I decide I will add one new thing, one new event, one new person or one new writing to each day. I will reach out to others. I will force myself to move slowly back into life. I will spend some time with my family. I will enjoy their children. I will mentor a child. I will start putting my thoughts into a written form.

I begin to do these things. I feel better. I attend another meeting of the parents who have lost their children. I feel as if I do belong here. It has been four months since my son died. I am overwhelmed.

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

The Compassionate Friends National Conference 2023... The 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: June 1st for July 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.

CHAPTER OFFICERS:

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS: Leo & Connie Licciardone and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya

CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Konopasek

WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Linda & Joe Zelik

Marilyn Nemeth

Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

National Office Information:

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

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

Online Support (Live Chat) TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please Note: Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to:

www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support



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

In loving memory of Michael B. Ruggera, Jr., April 1951 - April 1996.

Love, Mom & Dad

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 _____

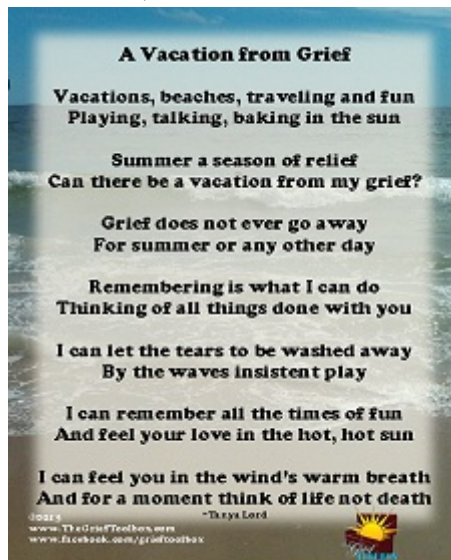
Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

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

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 3223
Torrance CA 90503



– Return Service Requested –



June 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.
©2023 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER

If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or
have a new address, please contact us.