



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

July 2023 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be July 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, July 6th meeting will start with "**Picking Up The Pieces After A Child's Death: Dealing With Feelings and Emotions**"

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccias79@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.

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The Thursday, July 6th meeting will start with “Picking Up The Pieces After A Child’s Death: Dealing With Feelings and Emotions” Feelings are at an all time high after the death of a loved one. The raw pain and surreal feelings are going to force you to slow down and find out how to live without your child here with you. You will experience more emotions and feelings in such an abrupt way that you will think you are going crazy. How we deal with these feelings and emotions in a constructive way will help us in our grief. The emotional roller coaster of grief will define your life for awhile... Remember to take care of yourself. Set low expectations that you can reach and then move on to bigger ones. Grieve at your own pace. Slowly, through trial and error you will regain control over how you handle things as you mourn and process your feelings. We welcome you to join us as we share positive ways of dealing with some of the emotions that face bereaved parents.

Feelings

When I started this grieving process, as I imagine most grievers do, I read everything I could get my hands on. I wanted to know all I could about grieving. Mostly, I wanted to figure out how to grieve most efficiently. It was surprising to me, as I don't consider myself an over achiever by any means, but I wanted to do this thing right. (If I ever write a book on grieving, it will be titled Efficient Grieving: For Those Who Want To Grieve Right The First Time.) (I'm almost entirely serious about that.) I'm petrified at the thought of walking along three years down the road and realizing, like a sledge hammer to the stomach, that I haven't dealt with the trauma. So I read a lot. And a lot of the grieving experts said things like: be gentle with yourself, there's no wrong way to grieve, you have to let yourself feel your feelings.

That last bit of obvious wisdom stuck with me. It sounds like silly advice but I figured I might as well give it a shot. And, ever the rule follower, I'm doing my best. Never in my life have I been so concerned with feeling my feelings. I feel and feel and think about feeling. All the time. Letting myself experience whatever arises and pondering it, chewing it over in my mind like a piece of gum.

For the most part, it's easy. Let myself feel sad. Certainly something I can do. It's easy to sit on my couch, wallow in this incredible loss. Easy to delve



into the why why why and obsessively replay all that I wish I had done differently. It's easy to miss him, to be engulfed by longing. It's easiest to stay inside, contain myself to this house and think that life just plain shouldn't move on without Oliver. And I think to myself, who could blame me. Who in the world would judge me for shutting myself up in here, not exposing myself to the treachery that is the outside world, opening myself up to awful painful awkward encounters.

And I can even let myself feel mad. Which is rough at times, because it's definitely not my favorite feeling. I have been mad before, of course, but nothing like this. It's a disorienting feeling to be mad to your core. So mad you could punch a stranger who took your parking spot at the Savemart. This madness often opens the door to its feeling cousin, good old jealousy. It's an unattractive feeling to be sure, it doesn't look good on anyone. And, still, I let myself feel jealous. Why not, I'm surrounded by people getting exactly what I want more than anything else in the universe. Usually I'm happy for them, always I'm mad for me.

Unfortunately that's not what those airy fairy grieving instructors mean when they demand you feel your feelings. You feel quite comfortable being sad and mad when your world crumbles. Because it's so easy to be miserable. No one needs permission to be desperately unhappy when their baby dies. But, if you accept the instructions, to feel your feelings with no judgment and pressure, you have to let yourself feel the good feelings too.

I remember when, mere weeks after Oliver's death, Daniel and I decided to go to Hawaii. I had no interest in going but knew Daniel did so I agreed (imagining him off snorkeling and me ordering room service in bed while watching Golden Girls, which incidentally is exactly what happened). The week before we left I sat in therapy and detailed how much I didn't want to go. How I refused to be happy about it because, after all, this is not the life we were supposed to be living. We were supposed to be taking care of a newborn, we were supposed to be exhausted and blissful, not gallivanting on the beach with an umbrella-ed beverage in our hand. So I was going to go, I told my therapist, I just damn well wasn't going to be happy about it.

"But," said Carol, who always earns her money with one or two gems a session, "Everything you do from now on is something that you wouldn't be doing if Oliver lived. Are you never going to be

happy about anything, ever?"

Touché, Carol, touché. You see, the sadness, it's so easy. The happiness on the other hand, it's one tricky bugger. How can one reconcile a world where my son is dead and I'm jumping on a bed singing Call Me Maybe. It seems an impossible task.

The truth of the matter is, I have a happy life. And it hurts just a little to even put that in writing. I see joy in my future. I feel joy in my present. And it breaks my heart. I know that there are many more good times ahead, I see proof of it everyday. I let myself feel it. I let myself want it. I play. I dance. I laugh. I smile. And the worst part is, I mean it. (Though I always, always know what's missing. My happiness now will always be qualified. I'm happy, but. But I should be happier.) The important thing though, I reckon, is that I'm feeling it. I feel the happiness. And then I feel the complexity of guilt and desperation that inevitably follows.

That happiness is fleeting, always a sharp reminder of what I've lost. Maybe someday those after feelings will fade. Or maybe they won't. Until then, I'll just be here, grieving as efficiently as I know how. Feeling my feelings as they come and go.

-- Rachel Libby

Handling Emotional Overwhelm

To overwhelm means to upset, overpower, crush. To engulf, surge over and submerge. Emotions are incredibly powerful. They can hijack us in a moment. They can sweep us off our feet and carry us away. When we're grieving, emotional overwhelm can sometimes seem like a daily experience. When loss strikes the heart, emotions begin to cascade out. Shock, denial, disbelief, numbness. Sadness, depression, hopelessness, despair. Anger, hate, blame, resentment, bitterness, rage. Guilt, regret, remorse, shame. Pain, hurt, helplessness, frustration. Anxiety, fear, panic, terror.

Which of these emotions have you experienced since your loss? Which emotions are you experiencing now? Which emotions bother you the most?

Here are some basic truths about emotions:

- Emotions are powerful. Incredibly powerful.

- Emotions are feelings. Feelings are meant to be felt.
- Emotions are temporary. They will change.
- Emotions are real, but they are not necessarily reality.
- Emotions are not a basis for good decision-making.
- Emotions have thoughts behind them. Emotions do not exist in a vacuum.

We either learn to handle our emotions, or our emotions will handle us. So, how do we handle emotional overwhelm? When hit by emotion....STOP. Pause for a moment. Breathe. Then begin to process what's happening inside you. I have a simple technique for this. It's called A.I.R. your Emotions.

A – Acknowledge.

Acknowledge the emotion. Simple awareness of what you're feeling is a large part of the battle. State the emotion. Say it out loud, if possible. "I'm feeling _____." "I'm feeling anxious." "I'm angry." "I feel hopeless."

For some more possible emotions, see the above list. Just acknowledging the emotion can help to unplug some of its power.

I – Identify.

Identify the thought behind the emotion. Feelings have thoughts behind them. Again, if possible, say this out loud: "I am / was thinking about _____." "I'm anxious. I was just thinking about the time when _____." "I'm angry. I just saw someone who reminded me of my loved one and it took me right back to their death." "I feel hopeless. I was thinking about how much I've lost and that nothing will be the same again." Identifying the thought behind the feeling is important. Otherwise the feelings can get stuck inside with nowhere to go.

R – Release.

Release the emotion. You've already begun to do this by talking out loud – acknowledging the feelings and identifying the thoughts behind them. Keep talking out loud until you feel somewhat "finished." You can also write about it. Write it out. I usually A.I.R. my feelings through prayer. I talk out loud to God about what's happening inside me.

A.I.R. your Emotions is simply a technique. It's definitely not a magic pill. It might seem a bit awkward and cumbersome at first. As you practice it, however, it can become a helpful habit. Emotions are a gift from God, but it doesn't always



“feel” that way. Learning to handle our emotions is important. Otherwise our emotions might end up handling us.

Stop. Pause. Breathe. Be kind to yourself today.

--Gary Roe – Amazon Best selling Author,
Speaker, Grief Specialist

Website: <https://www.garyroe.com>

Bookstore: <https://www.garyroe.com/books>

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Ways to Cope with “Parental Grief”

It’s important to be both realistic and optimistic—you will never get over the death and loss of your child. But you will survive it, even as you are changed by it. You will never forget your child or his or her death. As you go through each holiday, each season, each happy and sad occasion that may trigger another wave of grief, you will gain greater strength and better tools for coping with the pain.

Don’t hide from your guilt: After the death and loss of a child you have feelings of guilt – which are common but not always present — confront and admit them. Examine the reality of how your child died and your actual intentions and actions at the time. You may see your actions or reactions in a more positive light. Forgive yourself for being imperfect – you did and continue to do the best that you can.

Accept happiness: After the death and loss of a child one of the major hurdles parents experience in their return to the world of the living is their inability to accept pleasure— or acknowledging that it even exists. But happiness or enjoyment is one of the most important survival tools, even if for just a moment in your grief. It’s okay to laugh in the midst of tears, to smile at someone or something. You might feel that your laughter betrays your child’s memory, but you need to know you are not abandoning your grieving by enjoying yourself. The only way to survive bereavement is to step away from it occasionally.

Take small steps: After the death and loss of a child it is important to break down the future into small increments, an hour or a day, and deal only with one portion at a time. Focus on tasks— feed the cat, do the laundry. These little bits of normalcy and focusing on the moment at hand will make grief more bearable.

Remember the positive: Focus on the positive

events and experiences in the relationship you had with your child. At some point, consider making a journal of all the details you want to remember about your child’s life. Review your family photographs and include some in your book. You may not feel ready to do this right away or you may take great comfort doing this in the early days— each person is individual in his or her needs.

Let others know your needs: After the death and loss of a child many people want to be supportive but are at a loss for what to do—they are unable to process this loss or know exactly what to say. Bereaved parents may have to be the ones to take the first step in reaching out to others. Let friends and family know your needs, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. If you’re afraid of running into someone who might say something about your child, ask a friend to do some shopping for you. Others could help you deal with daily tasks. Maybe you’d like someone to be available to listen to you or be around to ease your loneliness. Only you know what you need.

Surviving the death and loss of a child takes a dedication to life. As a parent, you gave birth to life as a promise to the future. Now you must make a new commitment to living, as hard or impossible as it may seem right now. You will survive this; however, the experience will change you.

--Author unknown

The Closet

I haven’t cleaned out her closet yet.

I’ve put off packing away for a long time.

I feel that I need to move some of the clutter;
I tell myself: today’s the day.

I’m cleaning that closet today

Her green lace dress waits for another dance.

The white T Shirt with bold LIFE GUARD

Anticipates another summer.

Three plaid flannel shirts wonder when they will go to college.

On the back of her door, the shoe rack holds:

Maroon high-top canvas shoes covered with graffiti;

Black strappies that she wore to her first dance;

Tap shoes from her last recital;

Boots and sandals thin with wear, but not enough.

What will I do with these clothes, shoes, memories?



Give away? Keep? Pass Down?

I feel these decisions too vast for me to make today.

I'll just close the closet door and wait for another day.

--Rebecca Pinker, Jana's mom

How to Deal With Friends You Lose After the Death of a Child

True friends don't leave us. Circumstances and miles may separate good friends for years with the only contact being the annual holiday card. However, when finally together, close friends soon find that cozy place of their friendship. We often have different friends for different reasons. Some friends might be skiing or hiking friends, while others are for sharing plays, books, events or juicy intellectual conversations. Only a few fall into the category of a close deep friend where we can share profoundly of ourselves.

These good friends don't abandon us after a crisis, especially after the death of our child. Friendships are sometimes tricky, especially after a crisis. This can often be a sorting process of who your true friends really are. It is easy to have friends when times are good but what happens when the chips are down? We might instead discover that people we thought were close to were not the good friends we believed they were.

There can be many reasons for losing friends after we lose a child. Some are that they may think we are not moving fast enough through the grief process and there fore are no longer fun to be around. Dinner invitations may cease for concern of the gloom the bereaved may bring to event. Other friends may not know what to say and therefore avoid us. This unfortunately can be true in tragic death situations such as murder or suicide. At a time when the bereaved need people most, they may instead find themselves isolated.

Another reason, especially in the death of a child, is the inherent fear that surfaces in other parents. Their vulnerability in realizing they can't always protect their children from death, is too much to handle. I'm not justifying their behavior but pointing out reasons I've encountered in my 25 years as a therapist.

In my personal experience after Kristen's death, I had friends who let me know that I could call them no matter if it was in the middle of the night. I

never had to because the comfort of knowing they were there for me was all I needed. These were my good friends.

At the same time, I was conscious of others avoiding me. This once happened when I was at the grocery store and saw a person I thought was a friend notice me and turn her cart around to retreat down another aisle. I'm certain she didn't know I saw her do this. On the other hand, certain people, whom I had not counted among my closer friends, emerged and were there for me when I needed them most. In a crisis we learn so much about ourselves, and so much about others. A few good friends are worth more than a thousand others. You probably have discovered who they are.

--Marin County, CA TCF newsletter

Hope

Every once in a while we hear a story that instills hope.

With saddened hearts my husband and I attended a memorial for one of my younger cousins who died from cancer in December. At the memorial his sister retold stories from his last days that I will keep in my heart as reminders of the hope that is there for us. My cousin Bob had been on hospice about a month when he called his sister at work and said that there were angels in his room with him. She left work and rushed to his house and again he said, —There is someone in the room watching over us.... angels. Several days later he was in his final hours and he called out, —Mom! (His mom died in the late 1970s while Bob was still in high school.) Finally, as he was dying, the last words he said were, —It's amazing!

Bob loved the outdoors, lived simply and was a kind soul. Because of this I wholeheartedly believe that he was giving his sister, and now us, insight into the beauty of the hereafter. His surviving sibling, my cousin Mary, by sharing this story has given us a gift. I have heard others tell that our loved ones are there to meet us when we die, but having this story told in my family makes it even more personal and real to me.

I live in hope of my son waiting for me with open arms when it is my time. I also believe heaven will be —amazing . Thank you, Bob, for opening up the veil between here and there to fill our lives with hope!



May you all hear stories of hope that make life here on earth more bearable....

--Celeste BPUSA Hinsdale

Reaching Out...

Each of us has lost a child. We know the hopelessness, the feeling of unworthiness that comes from being unable to help the child we loved. We feel hurt, we need help, and we feel the need to help others. The death of a child often brings about a loss of self-esteem. We must be reminded that we each have God-given worth and beauty. We, too, are of value. This sense of being somebody is important to the young and the aging, male or female.

As Compassionate Friends, we must commit ourselves to reach out and help others. Giving this help is not without pain. However, there is so much brokenness where we can bring healing. There is so much coldness where warmth is needed. There is so much loneliness and emptiness. There is so little understanding. As Compassionate Friends, we do understand. We are committed to suffer and rejoice with each other. In making this commitment and in sharing another's grief, we find our own selves beginning to heal.

--Audrey Hoyt, TCF Kansas City, MO

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
 Brilliant colors in the sky.
 Their splendor ends in seconds
 On this evening in July.
 "Her birthday is this Saturday,"
 I whisper with a sigh.
 She was born this month,
 She loved this month
 And she chose this month to die.
 Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
 Glowing briefly in the dark
 They are gone too soon, and so was she
 Having been, and left her mark.
 A glorious incandescent life,
 A catalyst, a spark...
 Her being gently lit my path
 And softened all things stark.
 The July birth, the July death of
 my happy summer child

Marked a life too brief that ended
 Without rancor, without guile.
 Like the fireworks that leave images
 On unprotected eyes...
 Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
 With love that never dies.

--Sally Migliaccio ~ TCF/Long Island, NY

I Have Babies And They Die

When I got pregnant after my daughter's stillbirth, I knew it wouldn't be an easy nine months. Between worrying about people's reactions (because contrary to popular opinion, this pregnancy will not 'fix' me) and constant concern over whether the baby is moving enough, it has been a very draining time. There are still a few weeks to go.

People can tell me it is going to be okay and try to be reassuring but it just does not help. They say this Christmas without Ariella will be hard, but next Christmas it will be different. But how do they know? My mind races and over thinks absolutely everything, just as it has from the moment that second line showed on the pregnancy test.

Because here's the thing: in my experience, I have babies and they die. One pregnancy, one loss. Ariella was my first pregnancy, and there were no signs at all to warn us of her death. There were no pregnancy complications, no growth issues and no reduced movement. One night everything was fine and the next morning nothing would ever be fine again. How do you deal with that in a subsequent pregnancy?

For me it has meant not wanting to get anything ready. I don't want to put the car seat in the car because I don't want to drive home from the hospital with it empty again. I'm not sure I could stand that heartache. I don't want to set up the change table only to have to pack it all away again when there is no baby to change. I don't want to change the sheets in the cot because I just cannot imagine what it would be like to have a baby actually in the cot using those sheets.

Because after all, experience tells me that when I have a baby, she dies. One baby was born, one baby was buried.

I need the statistics to change; I need just one moment of peace. I need to prove that my body



can be trusted and prove my experience wrong. I need to know when I have a baby, it won't end in death. But I don't know how to do that. I have made it through 36 weeks of pregnancy, admittedly with some meltdowns along the way. I've been as strong as I can be for 36 weeks but my strength is starting to crumble. There is not that long left to go but at the same time, there is eternity to go. Until I have a living, breathing, wriggling baby in my arms I will not be at peace; I cannot be at peace. I know that other women have higher numbers and that one loss isn't a large sample size. But this is not simply statistics, this is my life. As I type this, I can feel my second baby squirming around and that brings a certain sense of peace to my ever worried mind. But then the questions start – are they moving enough? Are the movements as strong or as regular as previously? If the kicks are in a different spot, it means the baby has changed positions. Has the cord gotten tangled at all? Is the baby still getting all that is needed? I don't know how to calm my thoughts; they simply race around and I am left grasping at the air like a child trying to catch dandelion seeds once the wind has already swept them away.

Because all I know is stillbirth; that when I have a baby, the baby dies. One baby who lived inside me, one baby who died inside me.

There is less than a month until this baby's due date and it is turning out to be perhaps the longest month of this pregnancy so far. Milestones are looming: reaching "full term" status, the time of the pregnancy when Ariella died and finally, the due date. There is not a lot that I know for certain and I do not know how to keep being strong. I am simply doing the only thing I can do. I am waiting and I am praying, hoping that within the next month my experience will change. Perhaps next month the statistics will be equal: one living baby and one buried baby.

And maybe, just maybe, there is a light at the end of this tunnel...

--Larissa Genat

*Time may bring
more sophisticated coping strategies,
but the absence of the loved child lingers
in the heart of the parent and
remains there for their entire lives.*

~Julie Siri, Journey Through Loss

Newly Bereaved...

What I Need



TIME ~ Time alone; and time with others whom I can trust and who will listen when I need to talk. Months and years of time to feel and understand the feelings which go along with loss.

REST ~ I may need extra amounts of things I needed before. Relaxation, exercise, nourishment, diversion, hot baths, afternoon naps, a trip, a cause to work for, to help others, any of these may give me a lift. Grief is an emotion-ally exhausting process. I need to replenish myself – to follow what feels healing and what connects me to the people and things I love.

SECURITY ~ I need to reduce, or find help for financial or other stresses in my life. I need to allow myself to be close to ones I can trust. It helps when I allow myself to get back into a routine, and to do things at my own pace.

HOPE ~ I find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Knowing some things that helped them, and realizing that they have recovered and that time does help, gives me hope that sometime in the future my grief will be less raw and less painful.

CARING ~ I try to allow myself to accept the expressions of caring from others, even though they may be uneasy and awkward. Helping a friend or relative also suffering from the same loss often brings me a feeling of closeness with that person.

GOALS ~ It often feels that much of life is without meaning. At times like these, small goals are helpful. Something to look for-ward to, like playing tennis with a friend next week, a movie tomorrow night, a trip next month, helps me get through the time in the immediate future. Living one day at a time is a good rule of thumb. At first, my enjoyment of these things just isn't the same. I know this is normal. As time passes, I will need to work on some longer range goals to give some structure and direction to my life. It is OK to get some guidance or counseling to help with this.

SMALL PLEASURES ~ I no longer underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, a favorite food - all are small steps toward regaining my pleasure in life itself.

BACK-SLIDING ~ Sometimes after a period of feeling good, I find myself back in the old feelings

of extreme sadness, despair or anger. Intellectually, I know this is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. I'm told, this is because as humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death all at once. So, I give myself permission to let it in a little at a time.

DRUGS? ~ Drugs are not always helpful. Sometimes, even medication intended to help me get through periods of shock may prolong and delay the necessary process of grieving. I cannot prevent or cure grief. The only way OUT is THROUGH.

--Alan Tallow Adapted by Alan Tallow from Judy Tatelbaum's book, *The Courage to Grieve*

Seasoned Grievers...

Your Pup And I



Your old pup sleeps before the fire,
Muzzle resting on outstretched paws.
He twitches with a little yelp,
Reaching to a dream gone bad that he can't help.
A sound from outside jerks his head alert,
Ears listening intently,
Radar in search of your special step.
Not hearing the sound that he wants, he looks hurt.
His head goes down with a sigh.
He looks to me with mournful eyes.
I declare I think that dog sometimes cries...
He, like I, never dreamed you'd be the first to die.
He misses you as badly as I.
Even old pups want to know why...
And they grieve, like us, for one last good-bye,
And tonight I joined him as he cried.
--Fay Harden, TCF Tuscaloosa, AL

For Friends & Family...

Please Be Gentle

Please be gentle with me for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow, I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?" At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss.

Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can

begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence. Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be. Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss. Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears.

I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

--Jill Englar TCF Westminster, MD

Helpful Hint...



My Fellow Members....

Sometimes we do all the wrong things to get our lives back on an even keel. But, know life still goes on - no matter how we feel, how much we miss, how much we think about the person who has left us - not gone, just somewhere else at the moment. Know that somewhere on this journey that feelings heighten and subside often, but never out of our thoughts.

A more accepting attitude will not come overnight. But you will be able to tolerate more as the days pass and remember all the good times and all the happy memories, which never go away.-
--Barbara Knapczyk & Frank Knapczyk Sr

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...

Creating A New Normal...After the Death of a Child A guide to coping and informational skills for bereaved parents, family members, friends, therapists and grief related organizations (2010) In this 285 page book, the author provides over a hundred essays on grief related topics varying from "Celebrating a Loved One's Life Through Art" to "Getting Through the Holidays." Many of the essays come from the author's blog, www.survivinggrief.blogspot.com. Sandy Fox comes to the topic of grief and bereavement as a personal journey of loss. Her daughter, Marcy, was killed at 27 years old in a car crash. Though many of the essays are personal thoughts and experiences of the author, she also includes stories from other parents and professionals. Although the book does not specifically mention or address perinatal loss, many may still find some of the essays helpful and enlightening due to their universality to all bereaved parents.

--Book Review by Deanna Lockhart

The Strength of Butterflies

They didn't want to change.
 Their lives were full.
 The caterpillars crawled happily
 through the green leaves,
 Played and rested in the sun, and ate their fill.
 Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery,
 they did change.
 Their luminous beauty now lights the skies,
 their colors are vibrant, their airy flight is delightful.
 They didn't want to change. Their lives were full.
 They laughed and worked and sang and played;
 Our children loved their lives.
 Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery,
 they did change.
 Beyond their own imaginings they now live in
 indescribable harmony and perfect joy.
 Their new lives are a color invisible to us, but it is
 the color of eternity.
 We didn't want to change. Our lives were full.
 We cared and nurtured and disciplined and
 laughed and mothered and fathered;
 we loved their lives and them.
 Yet, through the darkness and quiet mystery,
 we have changed.
 Though fragile in our forever longing for them,
 we are gifted with a growing strength of spirit called



HOPE.

We are a resilient and enduring new color as well,
 held close to our children by unbreakable threads
 of love that keep us tethered for a while yet,
 between earth and heaven.

--By Mary Sue Zercher—TCF Marietta, Georgia

Summer Breezes

There's a hint of laughter
 Wafting past the porch.
 For a moment I pause...
 To listen
 In the warmth of the summer sun.
 Memories to bask in,
 Trees you climbed, kites you flew,
 Bikes you raced, waves you splashed in.
 At night we wrapped time around us
 As we gazed toward the heavens.
 The stars were full of wonder then,
 And lazy days seemed endless.
 Life spread before you,
 Laughter filling the wind with happiness.
 Just now I thought I heard you once again.
 How pleasant this breath of summer,
 The breezes hold such memories.
 Of life. Of you.

--K Nelson

The Space Between Thoughts

You are no longer in my thoughts constantly.
 You are now dwelling in the space between
 thoughts,
 a part of my every moment whether joyful or sad or
 in between, or both simultaneously.
 I walk, talk, work, play and you surround me.
 You are in the sparkle of my smile
 the wisdom in my thinking
 the rainbow circles in my life.
 As long as I live, you will live.
 As I learn, you are teaching, not only me
 but all those who are in my life today.
 You are a blessing, dear child, for all you were
 and all you are and all you forever will be.

-- Genesse Bourdeau Gentry,
 from her book, *"Catching the Light,
 Coming back to Life after the Death of a Child"*



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: Eric Vines July 1977 - July 1991



Dear Eric,

I wish you the Happiest of Birthdays in Heaven. All these years later, I still plan something special for your birthday. I recently bought a book for bereaved parents to help them plan and fulfill some special plans of their own. I remember how hard it was for me in those early days and years of grief, and as much as you liked to celebrate holidays and special days, I want to help them find new traditions to use in the upcoming years ahead. I

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

will donate it to our chapter's library in your name.

Love, Mom

A Birthday Tribute to: Tiffany Lamb Corkins July 1970 - August 2005



Happy Birthday my beautiful daughter!

You would have been 53 this year only 35 when you left us. We all miss you so much! Never would I have thought I would lose you at such a young age. Your two boys are exceptional young men, only 2 & 4 when you died. Both in the military. Jake 22 in Air Force, Joey, 20 in Navy. We're so proud of them. We stay in touch often. They are examples of your kindness, strength, intelligence, thoughtfulness, and love.

Wish you were here as I do everyday...XO♥ Mom

For Siblings...



Teenage Grief & the Subject of Anger

Expressing anger is not something that most of us are given permission to do while growing up. We are often told to go to our room or calm down. We buy the message that anger is inappropriate and are seldom given examples of how to vent anger in a way that does not hurt someone else or ourselves.

Anger is a very human response to grief. We may be angry at ourselves, the doctor, God, or friends who have family members that we no longer have. We can even be mad at our loved one for dying and leaving us alone to deal with life without them.

It has been said that depression

is often a result of anger turned inward. If we intellectualize or minimize our anger, it will not go away by itself.. Our suppressed anger may find an avenue in situations that appear to be unrelated to the death.

Some people have found that anger can be safely expressed in the following ways: writing an angry letter and tearing it up, screaming into a pillow, punching a pillow or mattress, scribbling with red crayon until you get tired, exercising - running, bicycling or boxing, etc. while doing the above, verbalize either out loud or silently, the anger you are feeling. Verbalizing is an effective way of focusing your anger where it belongs.

Journaling or drawing can also release anger. At the top of a sheet of paper, you might want to write, "I am angry because..." and respond to this question with short sentences or sketches. Writing brings responses from the intellect and drawing can bring deeper responses from the heart, so think about doing both.

If you have mastered the art of meditation and are accustomed to being still in the silence, this can be an opportunity to look deeply into the source of your anger. Often we are angry for reasons that are quite different from what we originally thought. Prayer is also a great healer. Prayer and meditation are thought, by many, to be methods of avoiding angry thoughts and feelings. On the contrary, prayer and meditation provide an opportunity to look directly into the face of anger in an environment that produces clarity and direction.

If you are not feeling anger at this time, respect that. There is not a magic formula that says you have to be angry while grieving. Anger is simply a common and frequent response to grief for many people. Follow your heart and allow yourself to grieve in your own way and in your time.

-- Linda Cunningham TCF Western Australia

I See You

I see you. You probably imagine nobody does, hiding among your thoughts.

Nobody really knows how it is for you right now, nor should anyone steal your sadness. You're merely surviving inside your mind, dwelling in the cavernous depths of a well, maybe hands pressed against the dank, mossy walls, searching blindly for an escape. There is nothing to draw you out.



It's where you need to be, for now, for self - preservation. Nobody senses that exact place but you. I can only remember what it was like for me. I wish I could find you and tell you: That very first morning, when the sun dared to reveal itself in the earlier darkened room, it was like being awakened from what had to have been a dream - I was never accustomed to nightmares but certainly that must have been what it was, not a dream. No. I'd finally drifted to sleep, sideways on the bed, in a thick green sweatshirt amidst the sticky, heavy, end-of-August heat to fight the chills that ebbed into paroxysms. Did this really happen? Yes. Felt sick. Maybe I will be sick...didn't make it...my brother. The truth of the morning was no more softened.

Those first few days; the ringing in my ears was this constant throb, even when I knew the room was silent and realizing it was an audible unfamiliar sound of pain making its way from my heart, up through the calcification of my throat, behind my ears, reddening into that sensitive soft-tissue, the unprotected space where if you feel deeply enough you notice the subtle pulse inside without pressing your fingertips against your skin. In the quiet, this sound grew louder and louder until it was an internal scream, then became inescapable - does anyone else in the room hear this? How can they not, it's so, incredibly, loud - I can't get away from it.

I began to recognize this feeling that brought me back to the truth of loss. It vacillated between a slow creeping prickle at the back of my neck and an utterly paralyzing wash of a tidal bore. My brother...that sound melded with the greatest sense of agony I've ever known; it was the kind of anguish that made me persevere on how the world continued to turn and I came back to that question over, and over, and over again; my brother...it came with words in fragments that replayed this horrid, never ending melancholy melody in different arrangements...was in an accident...didn't make it...my brother... accident...my brother. And then questions. Why? What? How is the world turning?

I'd continue to ask the same question the next day. And the day after that. Then two days later, I'd ask it and be seized awake in the night so the morning brought no questions - just the same dull knowing. Moving through the monotony of the day, I searched faces, thinking I would find an answer to my unspoken wondering but knew

nobody else was on this ride with me. I wanted off.

So I smiled. On the outside. In the beginning it was practice. I didn't feel it, but I smiled anyway. I can't tell you what to do, that's not for me to offer. I won't encroach on telling you that I understand how you feel...or when that happened to me, I...because it isn't about me. What I will tell you is this: In those early days, you will count. You will count the minutes until the first time the earth fully circles the sun to the exact spot where your life changed. From there, you'll search other demarcations until you settle on the next moment of observation. It may be the second full revolution. You will mark the first week, then two, three, four, and then four weeks synonymously translates into a month which ushers in a new way of counting. A full month. One month ago. A month. Maybe it seems like it's the way people count babies' ages. In months? Is that how one counts loss? What will it be like in two months? Five? The first year will come. It may bring a sense of peace that you won't be facing a year of 'firsts' anymore and the sharpness will have altered edges and the way to mark loss will have blurred perimeters - but the calendar can't realize this, so it prods on like this miraculously paced dance that assuages how it felt before.

Please, too, let me tell you this, and really hear it because I didn't believe it myself - but I wish I did in those early days. Years will flutter by in what sounds like the gentle cascade of a quick gust through densely leaved trees. I can't mark it, figure the number of days it will take, nor estimate the months, or years until it happens. There will be a day that comes. You'll feel grateful for it. You'll be humbled to be on the other side of what previously seemed insurmountable. Perhaps it could go something like this: On that day, you'll feel the rejuvenated grass between your toes and your heels will be muddied on the outsides of your sandals in a field - but you won't care because you'll feel grounded. Maybe it's a party. You will feel the lightness in your being, you only observed in the faces of others around you. You'll snap a picture of your dad taking a picture of you, laugh at the ridiculousness of reposing to better capture it on film - that image stuck in your memory and making you feel happy for a reason you can't explain - the minutiae of life bringing welcomed ebullience. You'll squeeze the cheeks of your niece in your fingertips and marvel at the soft,

youthful feeling of her freckle-smattered face reminding you so much of someone you once knew, a long while back. You'll watch your mother hold a cupcake with a birthday candle your brother will extinguish for a year our brother will never see - but you won't think so hard about the last part. You'll savor observing the hard work of your nephew, almost half the age my brother will never grow out of - yet that piece won't be obvious until you really pay attention and calculate. The inescapable heart space scream will be displaced by belly laughter among children - close by and contagious, on the periphery, the smoker puffing with meat on the grill skirmishing amidst summer heat then retreating into the calm of night with frogs singing their nighttime soft summer songs, enveloping and glorious. You'll hear notes of real music in the background mingling with the tender croon of a singer's hook that gradually replaced repeated sounds of the turmoil requiem - as they won't have a space on this day.

You'll smile - and it will be for real. Those feelings in the early days will slowly give way for what is to come. You won't sense it happening or really even know exactly when it did. That isn't today. For today, let it be enough that you honored the sun's invitation and began this morning. Take a deep breath. I see you. Take another deep breath. Sit with the questions as they wash over you; find moments of pause, no matter how small, between the tragic sound, if you, too, happen to know it, when it makes its way from your heart into your throat; let the words echo as many times as you need to process what happened in their varying order; just know that that day will come. It'll be your day. Your joy. Until that day, I see you. I wish I could sense your gaze, touch your hand, so you'd know. Be patient. Take a breath. It'll come.

-- By Parry Kaufmann, Joshua's sister
Anne Arundel County Chapter, MD, BPUSA July / August 2022 Newsletter

For Grandparents...



Grandma's Thoughts and Loving Memories

Faced with the possibility that unless a liver transplant does all we are praying for, I will face the trauma of losing my special first, little,

great-granddaughter. She is 5 months old, always laughing, playing and the cutest little thing even when doctors are always poking her in the head with needles and all sorts of cords plugged into her. She is known as a “medical mystery” here in Nashville, TN. It just brings back memories of the loss of my grandson, William, at almost 27 years old, 9 years ago in Maryland.

As one ages, it just is hard to take when your youngsters are not living to be as old as you! I am 85, and lost my husband 7 years ago, but in terms of age that wasn't that hard to believe. I do remember my dear, little William when he was young, we had just had the funeral for his Grandma Lola on his Granddad's side. He was trying to tell my mother about it, and he got mixed up on what he was trying to say, something about the coffin and he just blurted out, “the Heaven Box.” Did that bring tears to our eyes. I don't know why none of us had ever thought of that. A day or so later he comes to me and wants to know if I will send a letter for him to Grandma Lola. I was shocked and took a few lumps in my heart until I thought to say, “I do not think there is a mailbox where I could send the letter,” so I suggested that he might go pray to God and tell him what he wanted to say to Grandma Lola, the message would get there faster. He was delighted with that, and part of me still is in disbelief that I thought of all this so quickly. I just have to say, “Thank you God, for giving me the answer.”

When we heard of William's death, it was really breaking our hearts, my husband was on chemo and he could not miss a day. We lived in North Carolina, they lived in Maryland. Linda, William's Mom sent a recording of the funeral service. It was not at first that I could listen to it, but after a few days, I soothed my feelings enough. So, I decided to try again.

The message was so beautiful, as William had such childlike faith, even including what I had told him about saying to Grandma Lola, etc. Without prayer, I know I could not have made it through, and it is still the same with our darling little Autumn if we have to face her leaving us!

--by Lura Hewett, William's Grandma ...Nov. 2020



**The Compassionate Friends
National Conference 2023...
Registration is limited,**

there are still a few spaces available for this years conference. 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 very healing 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: July 1st for August 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.com
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsof suicide.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

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 Eric Vines, July 1977 - July 1991. Happy Birthday Eric! We love and miss you!
Love, Mom, Amy, Kelly and Joey

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

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

In loving memory of _____

Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____

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

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.
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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or
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