



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Sept. 2023 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be Sept. 7th, 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, Sept. 7th meeting will start with "Mothers, Fathers, and The Grief Process."

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.

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The Thursday, Sept. 7th meeting will start with **“Mothers, Fathers, and The Grief Process.”** Mothers and fathers face similar emotional and physical problems after their child's death, but how they deal with them can differ greatly. There is no one way to grieve and no quick answer to the pain a parent feels after losing their child, regardless of the circumstances. Grief is a process, and it's important to let each individual experience that grief process on their own terms. While a mother and father may differ in their ways of coping and working through their loss, often with hindsight, they find they have covered many of the same feelings and issues, just on their own terms. We invite you to come share how you as an individual and as a family member are coping with your loss.

A Father's Grief

The death of our son or daughter has an effect on us as no other death can. However much we have loved anyone else who has died, we are now facing a death which contravenes the laws of nature. Sons and daughters are supposed to bury their parents, not the other way round. We go into a state of shock. The unthinkable has happened: our child is dead, and we are still alive. How can such a thing be?

In most western cultures the typical male role learned from family and media suggests that a man must be strong and should not show tenderness, softness or tears. This is apparent within a family where many father (and grandfathers, uncles) do not cry. This is frequently reinforced by friends who say “You are really coping very well - keep a stiff upper lip” or “someone has to be ‘strong’ through this. It's good that you can carry on and look after all that needs to be done”. It may be acceptable for a father to cry at the funeral service but not for much longer, at least in public. Few people realize that grieving the death of a son or daughter continues for a considerable time.

Men usually share what they do, not what they feel. They do not find it easy to ask for help, whereas most women are open with their emotions and able to share on a more intimate level with other women, either privately or in a group.

How grief affects us

Grief affects us in many ways, including shock, despair, anger and guilt. There is no set order for when they are felt; sometimes one feeling

dominates the others. It can be difficult to summon up any real interest in other concerns, apart from our loss. Nothing else seems to matter. At times we may feel guilty because we have not thought of our grief for a while, or have laughed at a funny situation. We may swing between numbness and hypersensitivity, and feel so mixed up.

Grief is healed by bringing feelings to the surface where they can be talked about, understood and resolved. If those feelings are left buried they cause prolonged turmoil, bitterness, depression, family problems and even ill health. Fathers like all bereaved people need to realize that it is necessary to grieve, and to ‘be kind’ to themselves.

We can suffer from lethargy, sleeplessness and illness, making it a struggle to face the obligations of each day. Fathers and mothers face similar emotional and physical problems after their child's death, but how we fathers deal with them can differ greatly from how mothers grieve. To use restless activity as a way of escaping from grief is not helpful. Instead, try to be with the family and talk with them, discuss the differences in the way men and women grieve. Children may think that, because their mother is seen to express her grief more freely, she loved the child

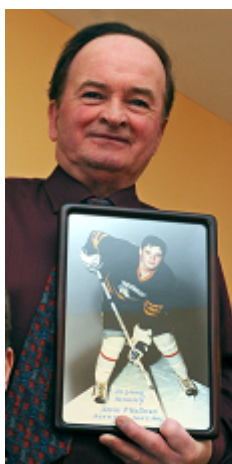
who died more than their father did, they may then see this difference as applying to themselves too.

As adult males, we may feel that we are expected to keep a lid on our sorrow, to protect those around us. Yet we need the space and time when we can sob our hearts out. Traditionally, expectations of behavior differed for women and men: women could cry in public, but men were expected to control themselves. However, nowadays it is more acceptable for men to show their emotions.

The natural anger and resentment over the death of his child may smoulder on inside a father. It may be anger related directly to the cause of the child's death - the police, the hospital, the driver, the doctor. It may be a general kind of anger that lashes out at anything in its path. It may be anger with God. One way of releasing anger safely is through physical energy. Vigorous sport is one way. Gardening or do-it-yourself are other safe outlets.

Relationship problems

It would be difficult for a father and a mother to



be in the same mood, at the same intensity of grief, at the same time. This can cause problems when one thinks that the other is insensitive to his or her feelings, and it can drive a wedge between us. We have to remember that our child's mother should be the closest ally that we have in surviving the death of our child, as she is facing the same loss. It is important to accept that we are both entitled to deal with grief in our own way.

Many marriages and relationships are broken by a child's death. We must try to prevent this happening, because we will be losing the only other person who can share all of our grief. Some of us are part of blended families where a father and a mother, each with their own children, are living together in one household. There are some different problems to face following the death of a child in this situation. If we are on our own for any reason, we often face additional worries, and will have no close adult with whom to share our pain. If in these circumstances we have children to look after, our everyday problems could include running a house as well as holding down a job.

As father to other children

Our surviving children have lost a sibling, and need special care from us. We have to support and guide them in any way we can, according to their age, and try to include them when we talk about their dead brother or sister.

Legal obligations

As bereaved fathers, we will probably have to deal with the funeral arrangements for our child. If we are next of kin to an adult son or daughter, there may be complex and time-consuming legal formalities, whether or not there is a will. This is stressful and difficult, and will probably need a solicitor's advice.

Coping with special occasions

Birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas and other days of celebration will be difficult for us, especially in the first year. We need to plan for these occasions, perhaps by doing something different from previous years. In fact, whenever there is a family gathering of any kind, there is always going to be that missing member of the family, and we will have an underlying feeling of sadness at these events.

Returning to work

We may have to return to work soon after the funeral of our son or daughter. We feel that we must continue to provide for the family, and some of us may be fearful of losing our jobs. Sometimes

the workplace can seem a relief from the pressures at home. At other times, we may feel that it is impossible to go back to the same job. If we are fortunate, our employer will allow us to ease back into our job on a part- or flex- time arrangement. We may need to move to a different area of work if we are dealing face-to-face with members of the public, and are finding it difficult passing for normal.

Amongst our colleagues, there will be those who find it difficult to deal with us. We will be greeted with expressions of sympathy, but also embarrassment, awkwardness and anxiety. Thankfully, there can be those who show kindness, even when we are not easy to be with; they are willing to listen when we feel a need to talk about our dead child, both in the early days of our return to work and after much time has passed.

Some fathers do not go out to work. We may have chosen to work from home, for all or some of our employment. We may be unemployed, disabled or retired. Whatever the reason, we will be around the house for much of the day, and this can bring other problems. There will be less opportunity to interact with other people.

Some employers are very understanding about a father's needs at this time. Bereaved fathers may throw themselves into their work with increased intensity in an attempt to forget the death of their child. In a few weeks he may appear to have adjusted to a normal work routine, but the turmoil and anguish are still within him.



The future

Our physical well being is a great asset in dealing with the emotional and mental aspects of grief. It can be beneficial to engage in some form of light exercise which will leave us tired and ready for sleep. At times we can think that we have no energy to participate in activities, but if we push ourselves, we can find relief from stress, and feel better afterwards.

There should be no guilty feelings about resuming some enjoyable leisure pastimes. However, we may benefit from finding some different interests to help us achieve a new normality in a life without our child. There are ways in which bereaved parents can find comfort after the death of a child.

Contact with friends who are prepared to accept that we may not be very good company at times can help. We may lose some friends who cannot

cope with the situation, but this we have to accept. Over time we find that our circle of friends is changing.

Sometimes support comes from unexpected quarters. Many of us are helped by writing down our feelings, in whatever form suits us. It does not matter if we do this just for ourselves or publication. It is important that we realize that, for years to come, there will always be occasions when we will become choked with emotion and our eyes will fill with tears. We will gradually get back to times when we can involve ourselves in activities, in spite of our loss.

--author unknown

A Mother's Grief

When we first become mothers we experience powerful feelings of protection; we realize we will do anything to keep our children safe from harm. They become our highest priority, the center of our new identity. Our lives change, we give up sleep, energy, privacy, free time. Being a mother expands our sense of who we are, and we develop into a new person.

We find strengths and skills we never knew we had; patience, empathy, attunement with another human being who is totally vulnerable. We accept new and wide responsibilities, we look and plan much further ahead. We put our child's needs ahead of our own, we adapt to our child's time-frame; we become nurse, teacher, handyman, umpire and so many other things too.

We may also find out uncomfortable things we did not know before. But we change - and we change for always. We have a powerful desire to erect a 'bright canopy' over our child, to make their life as perfect as we can, to keep them safe against all harm. It is this 'bright canopy' which is torn apart when our child dies. We lose a part of ourselves, not only because they are our children, but because of the way they have become entwined with our own identity. Our inner world is torn, as well as our outer world.

We may experience an overwhelming sense of failure; we thought that we could keep them safe, protect them, and we have been shown in the harshest way possible that we were wrong. Whatever age our child is when they die, we still feel the wrongness of their death. The natural order of the universe is that parents die before their

children; anything else is against nature, an accident, a catastrophe.

Our physical loss

When we have given birth to our child, the physical sense of losing a part of ourselves, if that child dies, is searing. We carried our child in our womb for nine months, our body was their source of nourishment. There are real physical parallels between the contractions of labor and the pains of grief. And their birthday was literally that: the day we gave them birth.

Many of us feel the loss of our child as an intensely physical pain; our wombs, hearts and guts are wrenched, and we suffer actual pain. Some of us find the anniversary of their birth day a very lonely and difficult time because our memories of that day are unique to us. We may find ourselves needing to relive those hours each day. And that is something our families may not be able to share, or even comprehend.

Caring and losing

As mothers our care for our children has been intensely physical, we have fed them, changed them, cuddled them and held them in our arms. Now they are gone, and it is not surprising that our arms feel empty and we ourselves feel lost, that we have lost part of ourselves, or that part of ourselves has gone with them. Even when our children are older, the memories of physical care are part of the bond between us.

The circumstances in which they died will affect how we feel. We may have fought a long, all consuming battle with illness which has finally been lost. We may suffer from the trauma that a sudden death brings - our child may have gone out to play or to work and never returned. We may be struggling to understand the despair that led our child to suicide. We may now have become a 'childless parent' or even a single childless parent. Each death brings its own particular burdens.

When our son or daughter dies, we want to go on caring for them as long as possible. In deaths where a post-mortem (autopsy) is involved we are prevented from doing this for a while, sometimes even forbidden to touch them, and that hurts. Mothers who are able to hold their dead baby, wash and dress him, place him in the coffin themselves, are able to bring this physical care to some sort of completion. It is hard to be deprived of these opportunities. Some mothers have found the giving up of their child's body an agony, and that this continued to hurt them for a long time.



Our surviving children

If we have surviving children, they also need our care, now more than ever for they are confused and hurting. Their lives too have been changed forever. Many children look back at the time immediately after the death of their brother or sister and say they felt as if they had lost their mother and father too - their whole family had disintegrated. We may know this is happening, yet be unable to prevent it. We are at this time so disabled by our grief that we find it difficult to be a mother to our other children.

Sometimes we struggle to protect our children from the full extent of our grief, because it seems a burden too big for them to shoulder. But this can leave them feeling even more alone; if we do not share our tears with them, they feel shut out. It is better to weep together than be separated by closed doors.

Our children's grief compounds our sense of guilt; our failure as a protector has led not just to our child's death; if we have other children, it has wounded them too. We cannot undo that hurt, we cannot make them better. In reality, we can probably help them less with this than with any other pain they have experienced in their lives so far, because we ourselves are struggling with something too great to be endured.

As mothers we may have feelings of failure and guilt over the death of our child, and these may bring us an overwhelming urge to protect our surviving children, even finding it difficult to allow them to lead a normal life, to let them out of our sight.

This is especially true if the death of our child was due to murder, or some terrible accident; we fear the same thing may happen again. We know this is not logical, but our protective mothering instinct is in overdrive and cannot easily be controlled.

Others in the family

We may also be trying to carry other members of our family at this time. Our own mother has lost her grandchild and is grieving; we may be able to cling together in the wreckage and keep each other afloat, but often we try to be strong for each other by hiding our grief. And, like our own children, we may feel we have lost our own mother, that she is unavailable to us because of her grief. We want to shout "Who is mothering me?"

We are fortunate indeed if there are people to

answer that cry for help, whoever they may be. We may also feel that elderly or frail parents need protecting from seeing the depths of our own grief; but in fact most of us are helped more by sharing than by pretending.

Coping Alone

If we are a single parent, these burdens are, the heavier. Not only do we have to be mother and father to our surviving children, but we have no-one to be with us in our worst times. As well as feeling desperately alone, we may find that his loss reminds us of other earlier losses, perhaps even the loss of our child's father, and we may feel doubly bereaved. In this situation, we urgently need the support of other adults, whether family, friends or professional support services, if we are able to help ourselves and our surviving children. If we are now childless the isolation is almost

unbearable, and we may question our continuing identity as a mother. Children born after the death of their brother or sister Some of us may give birth to further children after our child has died. We may be surprised by how interwoven

are our feelings, how the past death is somehow also a part of the new birth. Some mothers experience vivid flash backs during pregnancy or labor. Although we are looking forward to the birth of our new baby, we may find ourselves suffering extremes of anxiety and fear, our confidence is gone and we are full-of doubt and terror. This can make the early weeks and months very fraught and may make bonding with the new baby very difficult.

Sometimes friends and well-wishers can be extraordinarily insensitive in thinking, and even saying, that the new baby will somehow wipe out the earlier loss, that everything will be 'all right' when we have a replacement. It is hard to have to explain that the new baby can never replace the child who has died, can never repair the rent that was torn in the fabric of our bright canopy. We welcome the new child as a blessing and a joy - but we welcome them for themselves, not as a substitute.

Difficulties in grieving together

We may be shocked to find that we experience difficulties in our marriage or partnership. Even when we have been close, the pain of grief can drive a wedge between us. We think we should be able to share our loss, to support each other. But often it is not like that. We may grieve in different



ways, one needing words while the other needs silence, or perhaps action. We may find our partner's tears unbearably painful. We may hurt too much to be able to hold our partner's pain as well as our own.

As mothers, we are used to being the person who 'makes things better', or the one who sorts things out. The death of our child is beyond sorting out. Fathers may feel they failed in their perceived roles as provider or protector. We may each try to sort out the other's problems, rather than cling together and let ourselves grieve.

If our relationship was difficult before, it may get worse, rather than better, at least in the short term. And it may improve in the long term through our shared suffering, and growing understanding of each other's grief.

The way forward

We need to survive. As mothers, we need to be there for our children, our partner, our family. If we are in the horrific position of being the only survivor, then perhaps we need to survive in order to bear witness to the fact that our child did live, that he or she was special, precious, loved. Mothers do survive and there are some things which can help.

Perhaps the most important one is to recognize that we need support: this is not something we are expected to bear alone and for some the burden is too great. We all need to let other people help us. Sometimes we are so locked into our motherhood role that we find this very difficult.

--The Compassionate Friends South Australia

18 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Grief

Up until the day my 17-year-old daughter died, I hadn't experienced intense grief. I had lost elderly grandparents, whom I felt sadness for, but never have I experienced grief that rips your heart in half and nearly tears your family apart. While it is a fact that none of us will live forever, death always comes as a shock whether it follows illness or happens suddenly. Before we lost Katie in a car accident, I had all kinds of pre-conceived ideas about what grief was all about. Like most people who haven't endured the pain of losing a child, I think I had it all wrong.

Here are 18 things I wish I had known:

1. Grief is not five neat, little stages that has an end point. It's more like a bowl of spaghetti that is

confusing, ugly, and messy.

2. Grief is for life. I will love Katie forever, therefore I will grieve Katie forever too. While my grief may change with time it will always be with me and a part of me.

3. Grief is painful – Really Painful. It hurts physically just as much as it hurts emotionally. Symptoms can range from chest pain to body aches, and exhaustion. This can last a very long time.

4. Guilt, anger, and fear are normal feelings. So are bitterness, jealousy, and blame. Just be cautious of lashing out at others, especially your spouse or immediate family member. Likely they are just as broken as you are and lashing out can push people away and destroy relationships.

5. Your old self is gone forever. I've often said that child loss is like an amputation. I have learned to live my life in spite of my loss but there is a part of me that is gone forever. I have learned how to breathe, exist, and continue without my daughter. It's like learning everything over again.

6. Healing, or managing grief, isn't linear. It doesn't get a little bit better each day. Grief comes in waves and sometimes it may feel like you are right back to the day your loved one died.

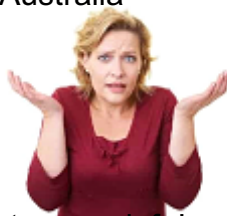
7. There is no right or wrong way to manage grief. We are all unique in our personalities and our coping mechanisms, therefore our grieving will be different too. Although you may not agree or understand someone else's ways, try to be respectful.

8. You are not going crazy. It may feel like you are, but this is a normal feeling when it comes to grief because everything feels out of control, including our feelings.

9. Questions like 'why' or 'what if' are unanswerable. No matter how much time you spend trying to figure these things out, you will not. As hard as it is, we must learn how to live with 'what is' knowing we will never have those answers. I admit this might be the hardest part.

10. People will say the dumbest things. Guaranteed. Death makes people awkward, so they end up saying things that will make you crazy. I have gotten through this by acknowledging that no one sets out to hurt us. People just don't know what to say because they don't know our pain. I remind myself that I probably said some heartless things before I lost Katie and try to give people some grace.

11. All the 'firsts' after loss will knock the breath out



of you and it's not always the big days like Christmas or birthdays. Sometimes it can be hearing your child's favorite song for the first time or going to the shopping mall without them for the first time.

12. The seconds and thirds and fourths continue to be hard. I thought this part would get easier because I had the firsts behind me. I was wrong.

13. Let people help you. Again, people say and do things that will make you shake your head but truly most are walking on eggshells around us, not knowing how to help us. Before the phone rings or someone asks, have a list ready of helpful tasks they could do to help you.

14. There is no such thing as closure or being 'healed'. We don't wake up one day and say "there, now I'm done grieving." I know some people don't like the word 'healing' either but it's the word I use because to me it's a reflection of working on my grief

15. Even though I will never reach an end point.

16. Triggers are everywhere and so unpredictable. Some things may really hurt one day and be more tolerable another day. This is normal.

17. It's ok to laugh and do things that make you smile. The first time this happens you may catch yourself off-guard and feel guilty. I know I did. But please try not to feel guilty. I truly believe this is what our children want for us.

18. The question "how many kids do you have?" will bring you to your knees the first time you are asked. If you haven't already encountered this, prepare now. Say what feels right for you. I always answer two. I answered 'one' only once. I felt so horrible afterwards, so I always say 'two' now. If the person asks about ages or wants to know more, I will say that my daughter is in Heaven now. It's an answer that feels right for me. Take a few minutes to prepare what you will say because it will come up at some point.

Connection with other bereaved mothers is a must, whether it is online or in-person. No one can ever know exactly how you feel unless they have endured the loss of a child. Reach out, talk, hug, share, cry, and maybe even laugh. Despite all that I have learned, I am learning more every day. I'm so glad that I have you to walk with. We are in this together.

-- Lisa K. Boehm



September Memories

Many of our members have lost children of school age. Even for those whose children died before they could go to school or after

they were finished with school, September often brings painful memories. Seeing children with brand new clothes and the latest craze in lunch boxes and book bags, lined up for the bus, brings back memories for all of us. For some, we see children our child's age, progress to the next grade when he or she will never have that experience. For some, we remember putting our child on that bus, the last minute rush to replace outgrown clothes and buy school supplies.

For some, the pain is from the dreams we had of seeing our child go to school, dreams that our child never lived long enough to bring to fruition. Some of us have younger children who are now "passing" the age of our dead child, who should have been the older brother or sister.

In my case I have one daughter left, and I remember shopping for back-to-school clothes for two. I can't help but wonder what size Colleen would be wearing now. She'd be 12. Colleen rode in one of those little buses because she was handicapped. My mom used to hold her at the front door of her house, swaying back and forth, saying, "Tick tock, here comes the bus." I often think of that when I see one of those little buses. Even after five years, I still look for #77, her bus.

I guess I'm trying to say two things. First, we're all in this together; we experience different variations of the same pain. Second, we all have to expect that moments of nostalgia and longing will be with us. ALWAYS. The pain does dull somewhat with the years, but tears will always spring to our eyes at certain moments. The special days will always tug at our heartstrings in a way that non-bereaved parents will never fully understand.

At least we have each other, people who know what we're feeling and do understand our pain. I'm glad we can be here for each other.

--Kathy Hahn, TCF/Lower Bucks

Should the sweet remembrances of those things which so delighted us when he was alive only afflict us now? Since he gave us so much pleasure when we had him, so we ought to cherish his memory and make that memory a glad rather than a

sorrowful one.

Because one page of your book is blotted, do not forget all the other leaves whose reading is fair and whose pictures are beautiful. We should not be like a miser who never enjoys what he has, but only bewails what he loses.

--Plutarch Greek Writer 48-125 A.D. Written on the death of his son who completed suicide.

Because of You

The road seems long and winding.
Your death has affected my life, my thinking,
my behavior and attitudes.
Thoughts of you are with me daily,
not heavy or over burdened.
Just you - a baby, soft and silent.
I have changed - grown, looking at life differently.
Sometimes frightened, sometimes calm,
sometimes seeing beyond to a spiritual side where
I have learned to feel your presence, comfort, and
support.
An uplifting to a height I never would've known
or grown to see if there hadn't been you.
--Kris Ingle

Newly Bereaved...

From the Grieving Heart...

I'm hurting. Something traumatic
has occurred. Someone I love is gone, and they're
not coming back. I don't know how to do this. It's
like I've been hit by a bus, and I'm lying flat in the
middle of the road, watching the sky go by.

The world speeds on, oblivious to my loss. I
watch but can't seem to enter in. It's as if someone
pushed the pause button on my life. My world has
suddenly changed, forever.

I'm stunned. I'm hurting. My heart is crushed.
Grief can be heavy. And yet, I can't fully accept it
somehow. This can't be real.

I know this is confusing for you. It's confusing
for me also. You're probably wondering what to
say or what to do.

You can come sit beside me in the road, if you
want. You don't have to say much. In fact, you
don't have to say anything at all. Your presence is
worth all the words in the world right now.

I probably won't say much either. Don't expect
much out of me. I won't be myself for a while. In

fact, I may never be the same again. This is
something we'll both have to grapple with, but now
isn't the time for that.

Sometimes all I can do is lie here and breathe.
I won't be here forever, but it's where I am today.

This is hard. It hurts.

I don't know how to begin, so I'll just stumble
forward and hope my seemingly random thoughts
and emotions will make some kind of sense to you.

Thanks for reading this. I know this is strange.
It's weird for me, too.

Please be patient with me. I'm grieving.
--Gary Roe

Seasoned Griefers...

Why Do I Attend Bereaved Parents Meetings?

I first attended Bereaved Parents support
meetings because my son had died and I felt like
I had died too.

I attended meetings because there were other
parents there who seemed as devastated as I
was.

I attended meetings because I saw and heard
parents talk and cry and share their feelings,
without embarrassment.

I attended meetings because I saw survivors;
parents who were somehow managing to find a
reason to keep on living.

I attended meetings because I felt validated, I
could actually tell stories about my child who
had died.

I attended meetings because I was learning
how to find my place in my new world.

I attended meetings because another mother
said how my words at an earlier encounter had
given her hope.

And now, I attend meetings because all these
things are still true but now, I can give back...
--Donna Corrigan

Editor's Note: We encourage you to attend our
meetings so you too can benefit from the
knowledge, outpouring of hope, love, and
acceptance that only another bereaved parent or
sibling member can fully understand. We too have
experienced the pain and confusion you are facing
now. Others were there when we needed it and
now it is our turn to reach out and help you.



Friends And Family...

"Don't Steal My Grief"

Don't try to make me feel 'better,
By quipping your cute jokes.
Don't try to rob me of my pain,
When I need it as my cloak.
I know you probably think,
You're doing me a favor,
But what you don't understand,
Is that my sadness is my savior,
Don't try to steal my right,
To express my grief in my own way.
You see, I lost my child,
And grief is the price that I must pay.
I need to feel the hurt and pain,
As it beats inside my chest.
Don't try to steal my grief,
When it's the only feeling I have left.

--Faye McCord, Co-Chapter Leader, TCF Jackson,
MS in loving memory of my son, Lane McCord



Welcome...

I Didn't Have A Sister Until My Child Died

As a child, I often felt a deep loneliness when meeting my friends' sisters. I had no sister. There was no one with whom I could share my secrets, my successes, my dreams, my failures, my fears, my heartbreaks, my environment, my stresses, my sadness or my love. There was no sister who shared the meaningful events in my life. But time moved on.

Then my only child died. My life turned upside down as a mother's worst fear became a reality. I was in shock. I was depressed, withdrawn, broken and lost. I began attending Compassionate Friends meetings. Initially I felt only my heartbreak and the heartbreak of the mothers whose children had died. As I continued to attend the meetings, I felt a kinship to these women. I learned the story of their children and shared the story of my child. I began to think of their children as nieces and nephews who were with my child.

We shared our anxieties, secrets, successes, dreams, failures, fears, heartbreaks, stresses and experiences. We were walking the same lonely road together. We had a common bond, a bond as thick as blood.....our precious children were dead.

As I meet newly bereaved parents, I look at the mothers and realize I may well have another sister.

This is a big family now and, sadly, it's getting bigger. I experience the pain of many birthdays and death anniversaries throughout the year. I feel the blood-curdling scream of each mother whose child has died. She is my sister. I reach out to her, as others have reached out to me, and in so doing, I may help her and bring a tiny bit of peace to her and to myself.

Yes, it would be easier to turn my back and pretend I don't connect with these mothers. But I do connect with them. And life isn't always about the easy road, as we have sadly come to understand. Life is about finding ourselves in the midst of chaos and tragedy and moving forward to a deeper, more meaningful normalcy. A normalcy that includes the memories of our child and our sisters' children.

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

Editor's Note: The friendships and understanding that emerge from TCF meetings can make life easier to bear as you struggle to find your way after the loss of your child.

Helpful Hint...



"Grieving is a journey that teaches us how to love in a new way now that our loved one is no longer with us. Consciously remembering those who have died is the key that opens the heart, that allows us to love them in new ways."

-- Tom Attig, The Heart of Grief

Book In Review...



Children Die, Too By Joy and Marvin Johnson. This is one of the first grief books. We talk about feelings, dealing with guilt, facing sadness and moving on. There are sections for other children. A good short, first book for parents. Available from www.Centering.org

Death may have taken you from me
But death can't take
my memories of you from me,
Those wonderful and perfect
and beautiful memories of you.
Those, thank God, are mine to keep.
I will miss you, love you
and remember you every single day
until we meet again.

--PB/Blowing Kisses to Heaven



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 Albarez

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Larry Brooks 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 Trilegi &
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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

Emma Nicole Lerner
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06
Mother: Nancy Lerner

Joseph Mc Coy
Born: 9/11 Died: 11/14
Mother: Amy McCoy

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

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

Kevin Le Nguyen
Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14
Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen

Sarah Mc Donald
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17
Parents: Tom & Shideh
Mc Donald

Leslie Geraci Hart
Born 6/66 Died: 7/11
Father: John Geraci

Jillian Nicole Katnic
Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18
Mother: Debbie Hughes

Joseph Licciardone
Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16
Parents: Connie & Leo
Licciardone

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

Adam Guymon
Born: 4/89 Died: 4/06
Mother: Eileen Guymon

Douglas Drennen Kay
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06
Parents: Diane & Steve Kay

Gaby Lindeman
Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12
Parents: Gilberto & Graciela
Rodriguez

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

Christie Hagenburger
Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17
Father: D.W. Hagenburger

Kathryn Anne Kelly
Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91
Parents: Dick & Timmy Kelly

Joshua Lozon
Born: 6/91 Died: 6/21
Mother: Tracey Gentile

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

Bishop Michael Hernandez
Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21
Father: John Hernandez

Chase King
Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19
Mother: Laura King

Richard Lee Luthe
Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98
Parents: Jeff & Lorraine
Luthe

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

Jesse Hernandez
Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22
Mother: Joann Hernandez

Colby Joshua Koenig
Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10
Parents: Cindy Tobis & John
Koenig

Shauna Jean Malone
Born: 8/70 Died: 1/13
Parents: Tom & Mary Malone

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



Our Children Remembered



Jacqueline Marie Taylor
Born: 1/83 Died: 7/11
Mother Jennifer Flynn

Ryan William Thomas
Born: 2/82 Died: 4/04
Mother: Linda Thomas

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rennie S. Wible
Born: 8/66 Died: 1/18
Mother: Jinx Wible

Dovan Vincent Wing
Born: 6/83 Died: 9/17
Mother: Becky Wing

Aaron Young
Born: 9/74 Died: 6/15
Mother: Sheila Young

Steve R. Young
Born: 7/57 Died: 2/90
Mother: Marjorie Young

Whitney Marie Young
Born: 8/87 Died: 11/06
Parents: Marlene & Steve Young

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

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

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

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

* For corrections or to add your child to the Our Children Remembered section of the newsletter, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and leave a message.

Birthday Tributes...



In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month

For Siblings...



Looking to the Light

It is difficult to articulate thoughts and feelings about a life-altering event such as the death of a brother. For a long time, the only thing I could do to find any solace was to read about the tragic

experiences of others. I was often moved to tears, so strong was my identification with their anguish. I never suffered from denial. My brother's death was always a very tangible thing. It was my grief. I owned it. In accepting it, I feel that the healing was somehow expedited. I don't mean to imply that I am now returned to the unaffected individual that existed prior to his death, that my acceptance of his death is now clear. I don't think you ever "get over" such a loss. What happens is that incorporation of that loss into your daily life.

In my case, that process brought a number of changes in attitude and priority which, as it turned out, were in my best interest. I had become centered on myself and my career to such an extent that I was armed against life's disappointments. When meeting me, it became clear to others that "career" was what it was all about.

I keep pictures of my brother all around so that I can see him several times each day. In doing so, I am alternately both comforted and saddened. But mostly, I am comforted. I know he is in heaven and I believe he looks in on me and is aware of the magical events that have taken place in my life. When I look upward through my kitchen skylights, I can see the sky and the top of the big old elm in the lights. I talk to him in my heart and I know he is near.

I still shed my tears, for I miss him and will the remainder of my life. Given a choice, I wish he had never become ill and that he hadn't ended his life. Today, some two years after his death, I can accept it and understand his choice. The love we feel for a loved one never has to leave us, even though our loved one has departed physically.
--Rhonda St. John, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI

Brothers

Brothers grow together with wind in their hair, wild schemes in their heads, and with mud in their raggedy pants.

They look back into one another's eyes, with spirits burning from a common flame. They wrestle life with such similar hands.

No tree is too tall or hill too high to climb, for those whose bonds are flesh and set together through time.

Yet the song ever told us that dragons live forever but not the little boys.

Suddenly one of us is all alone, clinging to the memories of wind and mud and hills of stone.

We're still together in our own way, if not but in a burning little flame.

-- Ken, TCF/Salem, OR

For Grandparents...



God's Plan - Matthew Moyers

A little boy was announced to be coming soon
A baby brother for Madi and Macy, he'd be
Getting ready to come into this world
Screaming and kicking, a happy baby boy we'd see
He's God's blessing and plan
An angel boy to help us along
Clearly seen, in a vision so bright
To help us through hard times, not yet in sight
The day came and Matthew arrived
So strong, healthy, and pink
We trailed him right into ICU
Just to say, "Matthew we love you"
Now let me tell you the story
Matthew helped Dawson survive
And kept McMaw and PawPaw young
It was God's Wisdom, sending this son
Matthew was brought in and out of our lives
For reasons of good, and some never known
We worried and prayed that someday
He'd be allowed back in our homes
Then finding some resolution
Visitations were again allowed
With the miracle of Matthew back in our lives

He made us happy, and Oh so proud
Macy and Loral rose up to heaven
When Matthew was just two years old
But, he was a big boy, so wise beyond his age
He held others up, with the courage he displayed
Matthew suffers the loss of his sister Macy
And sometime speaks of his cousin Loral
No way, will he try to take their place
He lights up our lives, when with tears on our face
Now Matthew is six years old
So deeply bonded with love in our hearts
Doing life's purpose in a world so vast
He just seems to be growing up so fast
Matthew is strong, smart, and wise
He has all it takes
To be the leader of people
Maybe the President, of the United States
Just watch, this boy will be a great man
Thinking of yesterday, living for today,
He's preparing for tomorrow
Just watch him swinging away
Matthew is truly a blessing from Heaven
Standing so tall in the midst of our love
A Son, a Grandson, a Brother, God sent him to be
He was sent here to help us all, just watch and you'll see
--Matthew's Pawpaw, Donald Moyers
TCF Galveston County, TX
In Memory of Macy and Loral

From Our Members...



"Stuff"

I travel a lot and spend a great deal of time in airports. I spend so much time in airports that I no longer want to collect frequent flyer miles, but rather, the hours I've spent waiting for airplanes that are late, lost, or nonexistent. I am always prepared to spend those hours constructively by traveling with my laptop computer, a small carry on that can support my needs for several days if necessary, and a good book.

I spend most of my airport time working or reading, but sometimes it's fun to watch the never ending stream of humanity making its way down the walkways, heading blindly toward someplace. I also love to watch that endless human tide board aircraft, carrying all manner of "stuff" that they then try to place in the overhead compartments, despite the repeated pleas of flight personnel to "utilize the

space beneath the seat in front of you.” I have learned a lot from these observations. Traveling is a lot like grieving. We are headed somewhere with high hopes, little preparation, and too much baggage for any single human to carry.

We have become a society that defines itself by its “stuff.” We measure our “stuff.” We sort it, count it, store it, move it, treasure it, and discard it, only to retrieve it again. Our stuff is simply who we are and without it, we risk becoming lost, disoriented, and disconnected. This stuff simply has to come with us at all times!

Grief is part of our stuff, too. Our experiences get boiled down to a few essential memories, phrases, and images that seem to become necessary to hold on to. It would be easier if we would pick and choose which memories to keep and which to toss. We could, perhaps, get away with a smaller version of who we are if we only knew we did not have to fear forgetting anything that has happened to us and felt more comfortable carrying fewer reminders of the hurt and more symbols of the joys.

Trying to pack for a trip means assembling the vast amount of “necessary stuff” and deciding what can be taken and what can’t. We all have seen people who obviously cannot live without everything they own crammed into one carry on, while others figure a small reminder or two will be enough.

Grievors are like that, too. Some seem to be able to release much of the pain and horror far sooner, while others stash it away, buried deep within themselves, only to emerge at the least convenient moment. Some try to cram a steamer trunk into the overhead compartment, having wrestled everyone else’s stuff to the floor or simply moved it to another bin. Some try to compartmentalize their hurts with the idea that hurt and grief can be dealt with in an orderly and logical fashion.

But you can’t pack away grief in the same way you can toss stuff into a suitcase and then stash it on a shelf until you are ready to deal with it. Grief simply is a part of our fabric, woven into each fiber of our being, always with us, but not always recognized or even acknowledged. It nudges us, calls us, teases us, hurts us at the least touch. Grief demands to be heard, and when we turn a deaf ear, it grows louder and more persistent until we grow weary trying to ignore it.



We can sort it out, roll it up tightly, pack it carefully, lock it away, or even carry it around with us, but we cannot ignore it forever. It returns again and again until we learn to embrace it, wrestle with it, and adapt to its flow. If we are lucky, we learn to carry the load we have without too much guilt or anger and have found ways to release the emotions that accompany our grief.

Like our “stuff,” grief defines a part of who we are, but not all of who we are. The trick is to figure out which parts are grief born and which parts are joy based. If you are lucky, you’ll discover, some day, that it is all the same and that grief truly is the price we pay for loving someone. I am glad I bought the ticket, paid the price, shared the journey, and have a memento or two from the ride. It is often lonely, sometimes hard, but never boring. Trying to carry it all with you isn’t possible, but neither is ignoring it all and hoping it will go away.

So, pack what you truly need, give the rest away, and get going on your travels. Each breath takes you closer to your destination, even if you don’t know where that is. Learn to let some things go so you can pack lighter next time. You could let go of some of the guilt or fear or anger or hurt. How about weeding through the awful parts so you can get to the loving parts? Don’t discard it without embracing it first, but once you have examined the whole picture, let go of the “stuff” you no longer need to carry in order to define yourself. Let go of the labels and the worries.

Will it happen again? It could. Will I be able to handle it better next time? Maybe. Will I ever find love like that again? Not unless you look for it. Will I forget? Not likely. Maybe that is why we believe we need so much stuff around us all the time. Maybe we are really afraid of losing it all, not just the bad parts, but the good times as well. Do we carry too much, save too much, pack too much because we are afraid?

Just as you have never forgotten the name of the very first person you fell in love with, you will not forget your child. If we let go of that fear, we all can travel a bit lighter. Fear is a heavy burden to carry. You cannot forget love that has been given and received. You cannot forget the exchange of heart and soul. You don’t need the stuff in order to remember the love.

Love is the size of a sigh, as light as a kiss, as gentle as a whisper, and as small as a moment

in time. It comes in all sizes and shapes and cannot be saved until later. Love simply IS, and you have been loved. So lighten up. Carry less, live more, and love a lot. Love is a good thing to carry and really the ONLY ESSENTIAL thing we need!

--Darcie D. Sims

--Submitted by Linda Curtis

Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. 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: Sept first for Oct. 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...

Phone Friends ... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, sibling or grandchild 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	Lori Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
Connie & Leo Licciardone	Kitty Edler
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	Susan Kass
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla	



National Office Information:

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

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

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





DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



The Compassionate Friends is a totally self-supporting organization. Our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, but we do have operating costs. Your tax deductible donation is what keeps our chapter going. When making a donation, please make checks payable to The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. chapter.

Mail to: The South Bay/LA chapter of Compassionate Friends
P.O. Box 11171 Torrance CA 90510

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

Love Mom

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

**When making a donation, please make checks payable to:
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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September 2023

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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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