



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Nov. 2023 ISSUE

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING**  
will be Nov 2nd, the first Thursday  
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

#### **LOCATION:**

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

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

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

#### **The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...**

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

The Thursday, Nov. 2nd meeting will start with **“Adjusting to our ‘new normal’ as we face the coming holidays.”**

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

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

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF  
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**The Thursday, Nov. 2nd meeting will start with “Adjusting to our ‘new normal’ as we face the coming holidays.”** After the loss of a child we are not “Normal” for quite awhile. We have overwhelming thoughts and ideas that we need to work through. Holiday thoughts seem just too much to add to our burden. For those who have gone through their first Thanksgiving you know the feelings I am describing. Everything seems to go in different directions...the heaviness and the physical and mental fatigue...the pain in your heart, the lump in your throat and the tears that are just waiting to attack. Just the thought that the holidays are coming makes things seem even more unreal. Many bereaved parents feel they do not want Thanksgiving to come this year or ever again! “Why should I put myself through this?” “Is it my job as a bereaved parent to have to have some type of a “normal” Thanksgiving for the rest of the family?” “How am I gonna do this?” you ask yourself? Like every day you have lived since your child’s death you will do this holiday season, “one moment at a time.” You will search for what is important, what you want to save, what you want to throw out, what others can do for you, what you want to do for yourself. You may stay in town or leave; you may cook or go out. Whatever you do, it is your choice. But before you take the first step, you have to give yourself permission to have that choice....Never forgetting to do what is best for you and your family. Join us as we share how we adjust to our “new normal” as we face the coming holidays.

### What is Normal After Your Child Dies?

**WHAT'S Normal?**

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile because your child is missing from all the important events in your life.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming, because you just don't like to sit through anything anymore.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand “what ifs and why didn't I” go through your head constantly.

Normal is reliving the day your child died, continuously through your eyes and mind, holding your head to make it go away.

Normal is having the TV on the minute you walk into the house to have noise, because the silence is deafening.

Normal is telling the story of your child's death

as if it were an everyday, commonplace activity, and then seeing the horror in someone's eyes at how awful it sounds and yet realizing it has become a part of your “normal.”

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthdays and survive these days.

Normal is a heartwarming and yet sinking feeling at the sight of something special your child loved.

Normal is having some people afraid to mention your child.

Normal is making sure that others remember your child.

Normal is everyone else eventually going on with their lives.

Normal is weeks, months, and years after the initial shock, the grieving gets worse, not better.

Normal is not listening to people compare anything in their life to your loss, unless they too have lost a child, nothing compares.

Normal is realizing you do cry every day.

Normal is being impatient with everything and everyone except someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with other grieving parents.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned the house, did the laundry or if there is any food.

Normal is asking God why he took your child's life instead of yours.

Normal is learning to lie to everyone you meet and telling them you are fine. You lie because it makes others uncomfortable if you cry. You've learned it's easier to lie to them than to tell them the truth that you still feel empty and lost. And last of all...

Normal is hiding all the things that have become “normal” for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are “normal.”

~ Written by A Grieving Mother The Compassionate Friends Portland Chapter nl

### Everything is a first

Many moments must be faced. There are the first holidays, the first anniversary, the first birthday. Thoughts about my brother Dave will always be with us. It's never more than a sentence away from me—NEVER! The ordinary cannot be ordinary. A certain phrase, a look, or an article of

clothing can trigger thoughts and emotions. The joy of my senior year in college was interrupted by sad reality. FORGET? How is this possible?

The days and months following my brother's death were filled with grief. Flowers and food were everywhere—love and concern were translated into strength that kept me moving one step at a time. People don't know what to say—nothing is NORMAL. Tragedy has brought a seriousness to my life. Thoughts about the meaning of life and the unimportance of a lot of things I have previously found important are circulating in my mind. I think about my own funeral now. When will it be? Tomorrow, next week, next year, before or after my parents?

There are good days and bad days. I am learning to deal with all of this. People ask me "How are you?" Here is my answer: "I am mad Dave died at the age of 17. I am angry that my parents have to go through this. I am confused about my role in the family. I am jealous of other families. I am sad. I am fearful about the future. I am hopeful things will get better. I am courageous. I think about my brother every day. I will be strong."

--Lisa Ann Jones, Avoca, PA

### Find Your Voice— Even if it's Silent

One of the saddest aspects of walking the grief journey (for me) has been the judgment. Being completely honest, it began immediately. (I'll state up front that people generally mean well.) That said, the judgment has a harsh sting, as we have just had our lives devastated and our hearts completely shredded. How the memorial should be, why that music, strong opinions on burial vs. cremation. Pressure to speak when I can't even stand. There is NO right answer. This event is NOT right. It's horrific in every way.

Same with holidays. So many "you should's" it makes your head feel like your heart. It hurts! The expectations of what we can or should do come at you hard. And funny, it's never from a bereaved parent. Keep the tradition? Avoid it along with the pain it brings? These are questions that only you (or your family) can answer. This journey is as unique as each of us are.

Things that bring comfort for some illicit a deep pain for others. But each "suggestion" feels like an indictment. So we stop talking. Stop sharing. Stop being honest. And then we are safe. And

also alone. Grief and loss and death and trauma are so complex that it literally changes the way our brain functions.

Who could understand all the intricacies and nuances of this emotional path?? We wouldn't have either, prior to our loss. Yet it's still hard not to feel disappointed or frustrated or even angry at the lack of productive support, even though we understand why.

Again and again TCF offers all the understanding, support and acknowledgment, and helps us feel "normal," in an inconceivably abnormal time. TCF reminds us that our event was abnormal, our trauma was abnormal, our child loss was abnormal....not us. Here we find community, confirmation and understanding. We realize we are not alone. As we grow in this supportive environment we must find our voice. Even if we don't choose to use it. I love that I have been able to draw from the collective power and strength of all the TCF parents.

I pray that you can as well. Hugs.

-- Michelle Thomason, TCF, Portland, OR



### My First Holiday

The holidays are fast approaching. I can remember my first Thanksgiving after the death of my daughter, Christy. She had only been dead one month when this "festive occasion" arrived. I had not really given the holidays any thought because I was totally numb. I could not imagine how our family was going to get through them. I could barely put one foot in front of the other much less think of food, laughter, entertaining or being entertained. The most elaborate meal preparation I had done since Christy's death had been to call and order a pizza for delivery.

My husband and I knew that for our wonderful nine-year-old son Jason, we had to have some semblance of a holiday. Then my sister and her family said they were coming over and not to worry about dinner. A few days later, my special aunt and her daughter called to say they would not take "no" for an answer, they were coming to have Thanksgiving dinner with us and would bring a dish. And, of course, there was no question about it, Mother would be with us.

Somehow dinner was prepared. Of course, I do not remember fixing or eating anything. Mostly

what I remember is being surrounded by my wonderful family who helped us through the holidays by allowing us to cry, reminisce, be silent, talk, and yes, even laugh. We began our dinner with a prayer, asking God to help us deal with our grief and sorrow and to help us heal.

My heart goes out to each and every person who is grieving the loss of their child, grandchild, sibling, or any other loved one who they hold near and dear to their heart, and may this holiday be blessed with love, peace, and many understanding family and friends.

--Cathy Bowie TCF Southern Maryland Chapter

## Thanksgiving of Life

Only a month after Daniel's death, Thanksgiving arrived, full of symbols of plentiful harvest and thankfulness, while we felt bereft of everything. We fled to Maryland. There, among the many around my sister's table, Daniel's empty place stood out less starkly than at home. Love and family pressed around to hold back despair and the loneliness. Though we could not feel the spirit of Thanksgiving, we did appreciate the support and caring of our family. We marveled that any positive feelings were able to emerge.

Upon our return to New Jersey, we were greeted by a neighbor flushed with surprise and excitement. During our absence, Daniel's dog, Puffy, had given birth to three puppies - in her powder room! Our caring neighbor had served as midwife throughout the night of their birth, alternately crying for the loss of Daniel and laughing with the joy of new life.

That Thanksgiving, eleven years ago, held many special messages for us: messages of love, family, neighbors, and giving. Greatest of all was the message of life. Though we went away, we could not flee the holiday nor the pain of separation; we could not run from life. It was waiting for us at my sister's. It was waiting for us upon our return.

Yet, a long time passed before we could accept living again. Puffy's puppies, however, were the beginning. As they nibbled our fingers or wet the carpet, they caused us to care about them and their antics. Their damp noses and velvet ears helped us to feel something beyond the pain of Daniel's death. When they grew up, they forced us to interact with the community through searching for their adoptive families. We also practiced letting go as each puppy left.

For us, holidays are again happy occasions for the same reason they were originally difficult. Holidays are days set aside for love, togetherness, sharing, and families.

The death of a child turns those wonderful aspects of holidays into pain. What we discovered that Thanksgiving long ago is that even with the pain comes the beginning of healing from the love, togetherness, sharing, and families that holidays include.

So change your routine or surroundings this Thanksgiving, but do not try to flee from life. Life is the pathway to recovery. Allow yourself the reassurance of feeling life's healing power this holiday.

Happy Thanksgiving!  
Marcia E. Alig, Mercer Area, NJ



## The Family in Transition

When it happens everything is disrupted. Everything is different. The entire family changes. The family as it was, is gone. A new family may evolve— a family with an entirely new structure. That new family will include the surviving members and will incorporate the memory of the deceased child. The process will take time and will not occur without substantial pain.

In this process, tension is inevitable. Family members need to develop new relationships among themselves and to learn to deal with one another in new ways. For example, our children may hesitate to talk about their sibling for fear that it may upset us. In turn, we as parents may feel uncomfortable talking to each other in front of our children. So often we feel that we must show a brave front to the children. We do not want to appear weak or out of control. A redefinition of power and bravery is often part of our new role as grieving parents.

...Too often it is at those stressful moments when closeness and communication are so important, that a breakdown of communications occurs. Instead of helping one another, barriers are created that are difficult to tear down.

Can we truly shield other family members from our sadness? Countless parents admit the only time they allow themselves to really cry is when they are alone in a bathroom, a bedroom; or in their car.

-- Susan Hawkes



## A New Self

Mourning a child is a journey that changes you. The grief diminishes gradually, reappearing on anniversaries, holidays, and all kinds of occasions that might have been significant had your child lived. These flashbacks have been called "shadow grief." You may feel them for the rest of your life. But you will also feel pleasure in living again — as unlikely as that may sound.

"One day it just happened. Instead of waking up and saying that my child was dead, I looked at a blue sky and I actually thought that it looked like a pretty day. I started to whistle and sing again and I even laughed. I felt guilty for laughing. I had read somewhere that there comes a time when 'grief softens.' It didn't go away but it was not the harsh cold feeling it started out to be." Eventually, the agony subsides. Parents become less obsessed with the death. They begin to feel energetic, to take an interest in other areas, to feel pleasure and purpose in living.

But they are changed. "I am a different person now — as completely after his death as I was after his birth," states a mother whose son was killed by a drunk driver. "I think much of my personal anguish is the birth struggle of that new person. "

The new self is shaped by grief. People who have experienced a loss so immense, a crisis so major in its proportions, become larger, more empathetic people. They grow. Their values change. They change their priorities. They learn to appreciate the present. "My son taught me a lesson, and that lesson is that life is good. We should live it to the fullest, making every second count," said a father whose sixteen-year-old son died of leukemia. "Not only did he teach me how to live, he taught me how to die. Still, the greatest lesson of all is that you don't know how much you love someone until they are not with you any more." To live, to die, to experience the full sweep of love — that is a compelling gift for a child to leave a parent.

Bereaved parents feel weakened by a loss they had never imagined. Paradoxically, that grief can also make them stronger. "Once people survive this insult to their lives, this deadly wound, they can't sweat the small stuff. They're more direct. They know they have a right to be treated with respect. They believe in their own dignity. They become more forceful," states therapist Susan Faber-Brook. "In a strange way," said a father after his baby died, "this has made me more powerful."

That's because once you survive the death of a child, you feel you can survive anything.

-- Excerpted from "Giving Sorrow Words " by Candy Lightner



## Closure

"Last night, a grieving person shared that he's being "pushed toward closure" by others.

Another young man whose brother died more than two decades ago is forbidden from speaking of him. What is this obsession we have in our culture about closure, and what precisely do people want grievers to do with this odd concept? More importantly, why is closure so important to others? I suspect this closure-peddling by others is about their own discomfort with our grief. I suspect some have bought into the myth that there is an end-point for grief. They believe in a grief fairy tale where a moment-in-time arrives and takes grief to the netherworld, catalyzed by reckless recovery-seeking for that which cannot be recovered.

Grief cannot be extinguished by forcing closure. There are no effective closure incantations, or closure dust, or closure pills when the person we love most in the world dies. Nor should there be. I submit that to close ourselves to grief is to close ourselves to love; simply, to shut down our hearts. And it is not be sage to solicit closure to a broken heart, the underlying message being: Cut yourself off from the grief so you do not feel its sting. But to hasten grief when it is enormous is, rather, unwise and may well cut us off from love and connection.

I do not want this thing they are selling, this idea of 'closure' on grief to make others comfortable. Nor will I accept others' prodding toward it because it is not my truth. Closure is for old bank accounts, picnic baskets, toxic relationships, and peacoats. I trusted that - over time - I would learn to live again in a different way. I trusted I would be able to feel joy again in a different way. I trusted that I would be able to feel content with the grief being an ever-present in my life. And I made a decision to keep my heart open to all the beauty and horror that is real and inherently part of this human experience.

Closure is not for the human heart that loves and grieves".

--Dr Joanne Cacciatore From The Ugly Shoes Club, a suicide support group based in New Zealand

## Thanksgiving

You may ask, "What do I have to be thankful for now that my child is dead?" After the death of a child, where is the joy in a day off from work? What pleasure can we derive from sitting around a table when someone is missing, and an uttered prayer of thanksgiving echoes hollow in our hearts? Maybe we have been concentrating on the loss which has brought the overwhelming sorrow of death, and have forgotten the complete joy of life. When I remember laughing brown eyes, a mischievous grin, a scraped knee that Mommy could fix, a new word learned, even the memory of the realization that I had a baby boy, I have a great deal to be thankful for.

I had 1 ½ years of a dream come true, and I'm truly thankful I had my child. Sure, the agony of grief, the anguish of losing my precious child to death, the torture of wanting to see that child grow and mature and the pain of never knowing, rips me up. There is no Thanksgiving in entertaining these thoughts, so this month I am going to concentrate on the Living of my child, the Life that brought me so much joy.

In this I am thankful that Evan was born, thankful that he lived, thankful that even for those short 30 months—I lived them too. Even so, as he lived once, I live now and want a productive life. I am thankful I have come that far in my grief work to know I want to live and remember the good times without sorrow. And, I am thankful for my husband, who stood by me during the rough times. The husband who is the father of the child of our love. In him I have found my child, in our marriage I have found love, and that love taught us how to love that child. I am also thankful for you, my real friends—Compassionate Friends.

--Edie Kaplan TCF, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

## Newly Bereaved...

### Surviving the Holidays

Tradition is meant to serve people, not the other way around. Do not be afraid to change which is no longer comfortable or convenient.

Recognize that your emotional and physical strength will be limited, and do not overextend.



Enlist the help of other family members.

Parties and gatherings are exhausting, and you may not feel in a "merry-making" mood. Do not allow well-meaning friends and relatives to pressure you to attend.

If a large meal is part of the usual pattern, consider eating out or have someone else prepare it.

Religious services may or may not bring comfort. You may want to sit near an exit in order to leave quickly if necessary, without disturbing other worshipers.

You can not buy your way out of grief. Watch your spending habits. You may want to limit your cash-on-hand and put your credit cards away for awhile.

A visit to the cemetery is appropriate if you are up to going. It is not an obligation: you may stay away if you feel you do not have the strength for it.

Some people take great comfort in spending holiday time helping others. You may wish to donate several hours of service in the name of your child.

As you look at things to do over a particular holiday, ask yourself this question: "Will the holiday be meaningful to me if I do things differently this year?" If you try something and it doesn't work out, try something different next year.

Be kind to yourself. This is a time to do what is best for you and if other people do not understand, do not let that worry you. Grief is as individual as you are, and just because someone else was able to "carry on in the grand tradition," do not feel you have to copy them. Be true to yourself and to your grief.

--Author Unknown

## Seasoned Grievors...

### 7 Years....Learning after Loss of Son

November 5, 2021 - 12:45pm

7 years this Sunday. Many things I thought I knew about life, but then a car accident took Brian and I felt like I didn't know anything. As years pass, there are many things I didn't know that I have learned...

I didn't know that I could live again after losing one of the two kids I love more than life.

I didn't know my grief for Brian would be stronger than my love for the living those first 3

years.

I didn't know a pup named Luke would come in 2017 and save my life.

I didn't know that I could cry so much.

I didn't know that I would drink so much liquor to numb my pain.

I didn't know I'd find a little family called Pure Barre where my mental and physical health is a priority.

I didn't know that I would contemplate suicide after I lost Brian and not be afraid to die.

I didn't know that many would say "a lot of time has passed" and think "she's still grieving?" But for me its daily. That's my boy!! You don't "get over" seeing your child dead in a coffin. Could you?

I didn't know that I could still mother Brian by the many ways I have honored his life.

I didn't know that his friends would continue to remember him and still reach out to me just to make sure I'm okay or to send a hello my way or share their babies with me. They truly are amazing and I adore each of them.

I didn't know that the way I thought, felt, think, feel, behaved and behave are all normal for a grieving parent.

I didn't know that me and Brian would still be a team and he'd still be in everything I do. Anything I could be accomplishing and there he is underneath it all continuing to be my soul purpose, as he was when he was with me.

I didn't know I'd become a writer and that my words over the few years would make such an impact on the grieving community.

I didn't know that I could pour my love for Brian into others.

I didn't know that I could help so many who lost their child and that these brave women and their Angels would mean so much to me.

I didn't know that grief and joy can co-exist and that both are ok.

I didn't know that Brian's death would truly have me understand the meaning "life is short".

I didn't know that at the end of our all of our lives we truly just become stories. Every time someone tells our stories we are still here, for them. Let people tell their loved one's stories. Those stories are all we have left. We can't lose those too.

I didn't know I could, would or want to survive this tragedy.

I am grateful for the things I did not know.

#doitforbrian ♥

## Friends And Family...

### What Grieving People Want You to Know



- I am not strong. I'm just numb. When you tell me I am strong, I feel that you don't see me.
- I will not recover. This is not a cold or the flu. I'm not sick. I'm grieving and that's different. I will not always be grieving as intensely, but I will never forget my loved one and rather than recover, I want to incorporate his life and love into the rest of my life. That person is part of me and always will be, and sometimes I will remember him with joy and other times with a tear. Both are okay.

- I don't have to accept the death. Yes, I have to understand that it has happened and it is real, but there are just some things in life that are not acceptable.

- Please don't avoid me. You can't catch my grief. My world is painful, and when you are too afraid to call me or visit or say anything you isolate me at a time when I most need to be cared about. If you don't know what to say, just come over, give me a hug or touch my arm, and gently say, "I'm sorry." You can even say, "I just don't know what to say, but I care, and want you to know that."

- Please don't say, "Call me if you need anything." I'll never call you because I have no idea what I need. Trying to figure out what you could do for me takes more energy than I have.

So, in advance, let me give you some ideas:

- \*Bring food. \*Offer to take my children to a movie or game so that I have some moments to myself.
- \*Send me a card on special holidays, birthdays (mine, his or hers), or the anniversary of the death, and be sure to mention her name. You can't make me cry. The tears are here and I will love you for giving me the opportunity to shed them because someone cared enough about me to reach out on this difficult day. \*Ask me more than once to join you at a movie or lunch or dinner. I may say no at first or even for a while, but please don't give up on me because somewhere down the line, I may be ready, and if you've given up, then I really will be alone.

-- Virginia A. Simpson

"You must give up the life you planned in order to have the life that is waiting for you"

~ Joseph Campbell 1904-1987



## Welcome...



We welcome you; we are sorry for the cause that brings you to us and we know how devastated you are; we've all been there. Nothing is required of you and there are no dues or fees; you need not speak a word and you do not have to share. Attending your first meeting does take courage, but our members find a consoling group of friends for support, friendship and understanding that only we who have "been there" can give. We ask that you attend three or four meetings before deciding if the benefit of our group will help you. Just come, be as comfortable as you can and let us walk with you.

Meetings are a place to talk about your child, grandchild or sibling, a place to remember the joys of their life and the pain and struggle of living without them. It is a place to meet others who have survived which may seem impossible to you right now, Meetings are not "the answer", grief is not a problem to be solved, meetings are not "pity parties" although there are tears and sadness, but meetings help you find Hope. Meetings do not bring about closure; you close on a house, but not the death of a child, grandchild or sibling.

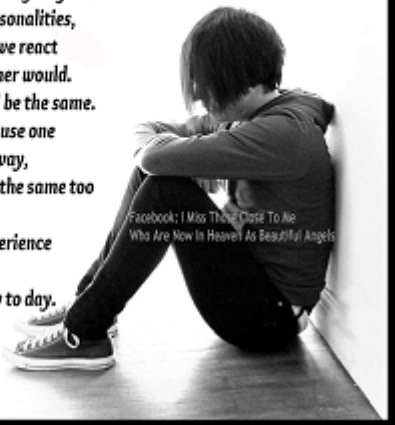
May you find your own peace and understanding attending our meetings and ways to cope with special days and holidays.

-- You Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The  
Compassionate Friends

## Helpful Hint...

### **All grief is different**

*There's no right or wrong way to grieve.  
We all have different personalities,  
ways of coping and how we react  
differently to what another would.  
No two people's grief will be the same.  
Some will think just because one  
can react to grief in one way,  
they think others should the same too  
- which is not the case.  
Each of us is likely to experience  
a wide range of feelings,  
which may vary from day to day.*



Facebook: I Miss Those Close To Me  
Who Are Now In Heaven As Beautiful Angels

## Book In Review...



Healing After the Suicide of a Loved One by Ann Smolin & John Guinan. This book provides similar stories from other survivors of suicide, which enables the new reader to identify with the same feelings and emotions. Losing a loved one to suicide is the most gut-wrenching pain any one could ever experience, and this book addresses those feelings, emotions, and struggles that the survivors are left to face after the loss of a loved one.

### **The Ache We Hold Inside**

When these children we loved are taken,  
And the years pass slowly by,  
You feel the grieving is over,  
But the ache is still inside.

This life of ours must continue  
And the tears we must learn to hide,  
But you know it will never leave you,  
This ache we feel inside.

Their siblings go on with their future,  
And you know this is how it should be.  
You share in their joys and sorrows,  
But that ache won't let you free,

Where they rest, you visit less often,  
And their voices are not as clear,  
And our zest for life is returning,  
But the ache is always near,

Our friends and families tell us,  
How well we handled our grief,  
If they only knew deep within us,  
From this ache there is no relief,

When alone we talk to them often,  
For we know they are still by our side,  
And the warmth of our memories comfort,  
But the ache will always abide,

As we continue this earthly voyage,  
And the calm and the storms pass by,  
We will cherish our precious memories,  
And this ache we hold inside.

--Author Unknown

TCF Redlands CA newsletter



## A Compassionate Friends Meeting

Tonight I got home from Compassionate Friends,  
And I'm glad my feelings are better again.  
Some nights I cry and I feel terrible inside,  
But tonight I was glad that I went and tried.

Tonight I got home from Compassionate Friends.  
They are so unique—on a scale they're a ten.  
Some nights I'm frustrated and all  
But tonight I am glad I went and stood tall.

Tonight I got home from Compassionate Friends.  
I'm so exhausted, but I'll do it again.  
Some nights I'm all wound up just like a clock,  
But tonight I relaxed, and all I did was talk.

Tonight when I got home from Compassionate  
Friends,  
I came to realize my purpose for all of this pain.  
Some nights I'm not sure what it all means;  
But tonight I realized this is Part 1, the opening  
scene.  
--Lisa McCausland TCF, Manitoba, Canada

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*

## For That I Am Thankful

It doesn't seem to get any better...  
but it doesn't get any worse either,  
For that, I am thankful.

There are no more pictures to be taken....  
But there are memories to be cherished.  
For that, I am thankful.

There is a missing chair at the table...  
But the circle of family gathers close.  
For that, I am thankful.

The turkey is small.  
But there is still stuffing.  
For that, I am thankful.

The days are shorter...  
But the nights are softer.  
For that, I am thankful.

The pain is still there....  
But it lasts only moments.  
For that, I am thankful.

The calendar still turns..  
The holidays still appear  
And they still cost too much...  
But I am still here.  
For that, I am thankful.

The room is still empty,  
The soul still aches...  
But the heart remembers,  
For that, I am thankful.

The guests still come,  
The dishes pile up...  
But the dishwasher works.  
For that, I am thankful.

The name is still missing,  
The words still unspoken...  
But the silence is shared,  
For that, I am thankful.

The snow still falls,  
The sled still waits,  
And the spirit still wants to...  
For that, I am thankful.

The stillness remains...  
But the sadness is smaller.  
For that, I am thankful.

The moment is gone....  
But the love is forever,  
For that, I blessed,  
For that, I am grateful....

Love was once (and still is)  
A part of my being..  
For that, I am living.

I am living...  
And for that, I am thankful.

May your holidays be filled with reasons to be  
thankful.  
Having loved and been loved is perhaps the most  
wondrous reason of all.  
--By Darcie D. Sims





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 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 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 Guerreva  
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 Luthé  
Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98  
Parents: Jeff & Lorraine Luthé

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



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  
Father: J.D. Parker

Jessica Perez  
Born: 5/89 Died: 10/03  
Sister: Monica Perez

Andrew Periaswamy  
Born: 5/97 Died: 10/16  
Parents: Megala & Xavier  
Periaswamy

Lindsay Nicole Pollack  
Born: 6/94 Died: 11/23  
Mother: Daphne Carroll-  
Pollack

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





## Our Children Remembered



Jamie Taus  
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21  
Sister: Jackie Taus  
Mother: Susan Taus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* 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...

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

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

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

## For Siblings...



### One Brother's View

Although the circumstances surrounding every child who has died are different, both in terms of their lives and the circumstances surrounding their deaths, there are quite a few similarities between those of us who are left mourning...in how we feel afterward, in how we regard life with a large 'hole' in it, in how we struggle to cope with the pain, and in how we may seek relief and establish ourselves in the breach between the life that was...and the life that will be. It is no different for the siblings of children who have died, as the experiences they have as children are strong determinants in how they will look at things as adults. So it is safe to assume that the death of a child has a lasting effect on the brothers or sisters who are left behind and it is vitally important how the family deals with such a tragic event. This edition's interview with Michael Lund, a remarkably personal account by a remarkably candid, eloquent, and insightful young man... evidences not only the limitations children have in dealing with their grief but the similarities with what we may feel parents. DG

**Interviewer:** For you personally, what would you say has been the most beneficial thing that has helped you in dealing with the grief you have all had?

**Michael:** I would say the most beneficial thing in my grief journey would have to be my family. We have had our highs and lows and differences in thought about what should be done, but we stuck together. Over time we learned to accept our differences in grief and honor each others' needs to the best we could be. We all have made mistakes and maybe have said a few things we didn't mean, but we worked it out. The most important thing we learned is that we are all in this, and we could choose to be alone, or we can choose to come together. In the end, we chose to walk together.

**Interviewer:** How long has it been since you lost your brother?

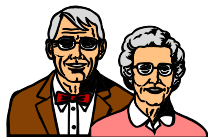


anything I was going through for fear that it would make them even more upset.

In my rational mind I knew that to not be true, but I couldn't help but feel this way. My father and I grew very distant and for that I became very angry towards everyone, including my mother. I tried to hide my feelings because at that point I felt that my grief didn't matter. I felt that what I was going through was just a glimpse of the pain my parents were going through so I bottled it up. I grew more and more angry and so upset on the inside that I took it out in very negative ways. Later, after my parents were moving forward with their grief, they could finally see that I wasn't doing as great as they once thought. They opened up a line of communication for me by constantly asking how I was doing and they included me in discussions involving my brother. They showed me that I mattered simply by including me. They told me couldn't go to my games because it was too painful to watch me play the sport that my brother and I played together since we were five, They opened a revolving door of communication for me in a way that I knew I was safe in opening up to them. They showed me how as much as I was a constant pillar in grief journey, they would be one for mine and our relationship has never been better.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else you would like to pass on to other families...especially the other siblings...in The Compassionate Friends community?

**Michael:** I would just like the other siblings to know that they are not forgotten, to not be afraid to tell your family and friends exactly how you are feeling. Demand that you be heard. Your grief matters. And to parents, include your other children. Open up a safe line of communication that must be a revolving door for the both of you. Don't let your children grieve alone. There is more than one way to lose a child!



## For Grandparents...

### Karen Gruschow Will Never Forget

"Like so many other teenagers, he felt invincible, felt he didn't need sleep," Gruschow, age 63, of Englewood, Fla., recalls about her 17-year-old grandson, Brett Poupard. "While he was driving home early in the morning (about 2

A.M.), he fell asleep at the wheel and ran into a tree." Brett was killed instantly. When her daughter, Debi, called to tell her the terrible news, Gruschow immediately went into shock.

"I couldn't quite react. John, my husband, called a neighbor to come over and help us. We had to fly from Sarasota to Detroit, Mich., and I realized what kind of state I was in when I packed nine pairs of underwear and five bottles of shampoo for the trip." Unfortunately, the flight to Detroit to be with her daughter was just the beginning of something Gruschow could never have imagined even in her wildest nightmares—the unending double-edged pain of a grandparent's grief.

"It's a double whammy," Gruschow says. "I see my daughter's pain and I can't make it right. As parents we want to make it all better, but in the case of your grandchild dying you can't do it. You are watching them (your child) suffer in addition to dealing with your own pain. It's somewhat startling."

Startling, yes, but not as uncommon as you might think. Government statistics estimate that 228,000 children die each year, leaving behind shattered families to cope with what experts call the worst loss. Regardless of whether a person has had a child, grandchild, spouse, parent, or sibling die, the grieving process will be the same. The difference is that grieving grandparents can expect to experience a double pain, because they also take on the pain of their grieving child.

The grief process (a process that does not necessarily progress in a set order) begins with denial, at which time the grandparent understands that the death has occurred, but their mind denies it. They may even think that they see their grandchild in public, only to realize that it is actually another child.

When denial subsides, anger may set in. The grandparent may be angry with him or herself, the grandchild for dying, her own child, or even God.

At some point in grief, guilt will set in. This is the point at which a person constantly asks, "Why? Why did this tragedy have to happen to my family?" He or she may also wonder how the tragedy could have been avoided by wondering "What if, or if only...The grandparent may feel guilty that they are still alive, while their grandchild, who was so young, is dead.

Some depression is also a part of grief. In some cases depression and grief can actually

make a grandparent feel as if they are going crazy. They may even fear for the sanity of their grieving child or worry that they may choose to die by suicide because of the sorrow involved in the death of a child.

"All of this is a normal part of grieving," says Liz Creech, licensed clinical social worker with Lifepath Hospice in Tampa, Fla., and counselor of the bereaved. "However, sometimes it helps people to know the difference between grief and depression."

Creech says that grief is similar to depression in many ways—you feel sad, tired, and cry a lot. But depression is different in several important ways. "If you are depressed, you stop functioning completely or have a very difficult time functioning. You may starve yourself or overeat. Not only are you sad, but there are no glimpses of any other feelings. If you have depression, you may need counseling or medication." Bereaved persons should not avoid taking medication to treat depression simply because they fear it will not allow them to grieve.

"Grief has a process, and you will go through it regardless of whether or not you are taking medication," says Creech.

Unfortunately, there are no "How-to" books available on grieving. Everyone grieves differently, acknowledges The Compassionate Friends, a support group that lends support to Grandparents and other family members grieving the death of a child. But reading books on what others have experienced in grief, and learning more about the process, may help.

For Gruschow, talking to friends and family helped the most. "We (our family) clung to each other. We told the story over and over." She says she talked to her daughter Debi almost every day on the phone, which helped both of them. "Just being there and not being afraid to say harsh things, being able to express the pain helped."

It can also help to take a bereavement class, such as those offered by Hospice; attend support groups that specifically address the loss of a grandchild/child such as The Compassionate Friends; talk with a clergy member, friend, or family member; write down your feelings in a journal; or set up a special memorial for the child.

Probably the most helpful thing, though, is knowing that the pain will lessen. "I wish someone had said to me, 'You won't always feel this way. You don't believe it now, but you will feel

differently," says Gruschow. "I don't feel the same sharp pain I used to. You never "get over it", but in time you can handle it better.

Now we can even talk about and laugh at some of the things Brett used to do."

—By Valerie O'Berry is a freelance writer based in Florida and also a bereaved parent. Her son, and at the time her only child, Michael, died of a sudden viral illness at the age of three on Dec. 15, 1997.

This article appeared in the Sept. 2000 issue of Mature Lifestyles/Senior Connection.

And the TCF magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone

**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 [Liccias79@gmail.com](mailto:Liccias79@gmail.com) for the link.

**Birthday Table...** In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or whatever remembrance you choose, in memory of your child. Our child's, grandchild's, or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others. Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday month and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos.

**Newsletter Birthday Tributes...** During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your



child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Oct. first for Nov. birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



**Get Your Photo Buttons...** Photo buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at our monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, call Connie at (310) 292-5381. You can mail her a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and she can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

**Memory Book...** Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. Each child is given a page in the book. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

**Library Information...** At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let Lori know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please remember to return them

to our library.

**Thank You ...** Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. A receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes if you include your name. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter. For donations at the meetings, attach a tribute to your donation to be listed in the newsletter.



**Our Website...** Leo Licciardone is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get your newsletter online. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at [Lynntcf@aol.com](mailto:Lynntcf@aol.com) if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

**Phone Friends ...** Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed.
- Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
- Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
- Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
- Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
- Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
- San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
- South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
- Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
- Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

**Local Support Groups...**

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

**Alive Alone:** For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. [www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)  
Survivors of Suicide: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253

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

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

New Hope Grief Support Community:

Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075  
Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place: Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

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

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

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

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

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

**Other Grief Support Websites...**

<a href="http://thetearsfoundation.org">thetearsfoundation.org</a>	<a href="http://childloss.com">childloss.com</a>
<a href="http://goodgriefresources.com">goodgriefresources.com</a>	<a href="http://griefwatch.dom">griefwatch.dom</a>
<a href="http://bereavedparentsusa.org">bereavedparentsusa.org</a>	<a href="http://opentohope.com">opentohope.com</a>
<a href="http://healingafterloss.org">healingafterloss.org</a>	<a href="http://webhealing.com">webhealing.com</a>
<a href="http://survivorsofsuicide.com">survivorsofsuicide.com</a>	<a href="http://alivealone.org">alivealone.org</a>
<a href="http://taps.org">taps.org</a> (military death)	<a href="http://angelmoms.com">angelmoms.com</a>
<a href="http://save.org">save.org</a> (suicide/depression)	
<a href="http://pomc.com">pomc.com</a> (families of murder victims)	
<a href="http://grasphelp.org">grasphelp.org</a> (substance abuse deaths)	
<a href="http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub">www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub</a> (Suicide)	
<a href="http://Griefwords.com">Griefwords.com</a> (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 Mantyla

CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines  
PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks  
TREASURER: Kristy Konopasek  
WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

**Steering Committee Members:**

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

**National Office Information:**

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

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

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

[www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support)



# 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 All Our Children. Missing you this Thanksgiving, Your presence we miss, Your Memory we Treasure, Loving You Always, Forgetting you Never!

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**

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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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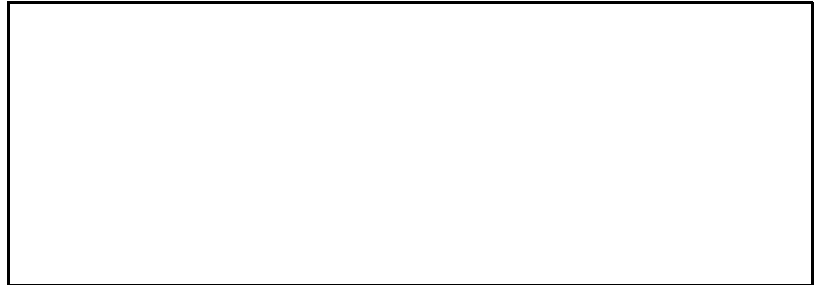
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November 2023

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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.**

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

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