



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

March 2024 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be March 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, March 7th meeting will start with "**Seasons of Grief.**"

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

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

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Connie at (310) 292-5381.

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The **Thursday, March 7th meeting will start with “Seasons of Grief.”** Just as there are four seasons in a year, there are different seasons in our grief. Both types demand we notice and participate. Both types have good and sorrowful memories associated with them. The coming of Spring cannot make everything okay again. But what it can do is make us realize that no matter what has happened in our lives, nature’s process will continue, and that can offer us hope. Be patient with yourself and with nature and let in a little of the hope that spring has to offer. We welcome you to join us as we share what has helped and hurt with the seasons of our grief.

Seasons

For some reason a thought popped into my head. Maggie was born in the winter and died in the winter. Justin was born in the summer and died in the summer.

There were many years between life and death for which I am eternally grateful. So many happy memories that spanned all the seasons.

Whether your child lived for hours, days, weeks, months or years you will find happy memories. They may be locked up in your grief if you are newly bereaved but mine surfaced rapidly. I truly hope yours do too.

I was thinking that our grief has its seasons. Denial, Anger, Depression and Hope. Denial comes when you get the phone call or knock on the door. I think grief begins here. Anger – you want to blame someone or something for the loss of your child. Depression is as though we’re in a fog and don’t know if we can go on. We either can’t sleep or want to sleep all the time. We’ve lost interest in what we used to enjoy. We gain weight or lose weight.

Hope is when we’ve accepted our loss and we’re going to be OK in our new normal a step at a time. Grief, unfortunately, hasn’t gone away for me and I don’t expect it will. It’s like a computer program running in the background, just as seasons do. It’s always there; always in our minds whether we realize it or not.

Some days we’re aware of the weather, other days we’re not. I don’t deal well with rainy days and those are the days my grief program pops up. I’m fatigued and sad. Others love the rain and their program stays in the background. It’s been years

since Maggie died and I haven’t dwelled on it for several years. But there are triggers, like birthdays or holidays that cause a storm of emotions in me.

Like the seasons associated with weather they dovetail; one turning slowly into the next. There is nothing we can do to hurry Spring, just as we can’t hurry Hope. We have to ride it out. Everyone grieves differently and at their own pace. We can look to the weather to see that’s true. As each season turns we sometimes don’t know how to dress. As parents, grandparents or siblings in grief we are sometimes at a loss for how we should feel. Is it alright to laugh, for example? I think it’s time to laugh when you are ready to laugh.

Unlike the earth’s seasons our seasons of grief (above) may not come in that order. Let them happen. Treat yourself as if you’re in emotional intensive care. In a few days it will be 2 years since Justin left us. I feel I’m in the Hope season but others still surface. It will be a while yet.

Use the seasons of denial, anger and depression as your least favorite seasons. Hope is like Spring when flowers bloom and the rain cleanses the earth. We start anew. Wishing you a happy Hopeful Spring.

--Marilyn Andreatta



Is Winter Paradise in Disguise?

Love paints the sky with sunshine and cradles the aching heart and fills the empty arms. We did love and so we shall again...in some other place, some other time. But only if we learn to slip and slide across the icy spots of our grief and practice falling and getting up again and again.

There is a purpose to winter. It is that time when the earth slows and the days grow short, so we huddle inside, safe against the icy blasts. Winter is that time when we allow memory to rise to the surface and we must claim and confront our fears, our aches, our hurts, our griefs. We’ve run out of places to hide. Grief finds us no matter where we are in winter.

It is time to live through this part of the journey too. So, bundle up, lay in a good supply of chocolate and tissues, and let the memories skate across your mind. Curl up with scrapbooks, put on the music, and let the tears flow. Claim it all, for we have earned it all. We could not understand light if we had not known dark. We could not sing sweet if we had not tasted bitter. We could not laugh if we had not cried.

Winter...perhaps it is Mother Nature's Way of inviting us to live through the pain to get to the other side, that place where memory doesn't hurt and the magic of love warms us from the inside. Drift away to those moment's of paradise, when love was full and the heart knew no past, present or future. It is and was ours to hold. It will be again-someday-but only if we let winter come and learn its lessons of time spent in the memory place. We cannot hide. It is time to remember and experience again the depth of love given and received.

Is winter paradise in disguise? Perhaps it is, but no one should have to endure frozen Jell-O...
--Darcie Sims TCF

Out of Winter, Into Spring

In the dark of winter the skies are gray, the trees are bare, the grass is brown and all the world appears to be dead. Yet inside the branches of the barren trees and underneath the dormant grass, a silent happening is taking place. The seeds and juices of new life are moving within and underneath. It is a silent, slow process not seen with the eye until one day a tiny green leaf bud appears on a tree branch and another and another. Little grass blades begin to emerge out of the brown and seemingly lifeless ground. Again and again the leaves appear and the grass grows and thickens and a new world has emerged. We see patches of beautiful flowers in variations of bright colors, the birds come and nest in the trees, butterflies flutter about and we realize the miracle of a new season - Springtime.

Out of the long, cold, barren winter, a transformation has occurred. A new world has happened. One that is fresh and full of promise of new life a miracle.

The grief process is much like this. We feel barren and alone. Our world is cold and gray and we do not feel alive inside. Yet all the while, the grief work taking place in each of us is a transforming process; new life is silently at work within our inner being bringing forth a new life until we emerge as a new person in a new world. It is a world quite different from our old world, for we have survived through our suffering to our rebirth.

No one ever said it would be easy. We cried. We hurt. We stumbled. We sometimes doubted and some of us cursed the darkness. Our grief season was long and hard but we told ourselves

"this too shall pass". And so it did.

And finally the springtime of our soul was created. Darkness gave way to sunshine; the bitter cold gave way to warmth. Desolation gave way to hope and we let go and embraced the new season of our soul.

A miracle happened.

--Connie Andrews TCF Harvey County, Kansas



Filling In Holes

Today, my husband and I went to the nursery and bought some flowers and bedding plants to go in our gardens. Spring is here, and the weather is beautiful. Not cold at all...but also not so hot that the thought of puttering in the garden brings a groan of dismay.

I remember my first Spring in this house. We were so excited. Our family was nearly complete. Our third son was on his way, and we had just had a house built. We were at the plant nursery at least once a week. Our life was busy, bright, untainted by grief.

I remember our second Spring in this house. How winter hung on, tenacious, unyielding, both outside, and in our hearts. I remember the first warm Spring day. I came home from work early, determined to make SOMETHING grow in my life. Maybe I couldn't get my son to live, but I was going to make something live.

Grief was a raw, open wound then, and my anger was deep. I was angry at the world, at God...at everything. And so I approached my yard, shovel in hand. I decided I had to have a garden in the middle of my yard. I began furiously digging out the grass, making an oval in the center. It took me hours digging out that oval. But I wasn't through. I then decided I wanted a garden right by my doorway, so I dug out that area too. And then I made big holes, and tore out all the roots and stones and other junk.

I made big holes in my yard that day. And in the weeks to come I DID fill them. Funny thing, as I dug those holes and pulled on the grass, my anger drained away. My salty tears mixed with the sweat of exertion and the dirt, and ran off my arms undetected to the outside world. Digging those holes provided an outlet for my anger and my hurt.

Today I dug some more holes. But this time, my holes were smaller. And I filled them with small, delicate flowers, purple and white. I put bulbs in

the ground too, filling other small holes. And I reflected back on another hole. The hole in my heart. No, I can't ever fill it with what "should" be there...my son. He "should" be almost seven now, full of energy, and wanting to plant flowers with Mom. But I have filled that hole with other things. With love and healing and memories. And with the lessons and the gifts my son gave me.

I never saw those gifts that Spring, as I was digging out holes in my yard. And though I would rather have that hole filled with my son's presence, I am grateful for the gifts he gave. And so I will go on, filling holes.

--Lisa Sculley TCF Jacksonville, FL

Anger

There is a side effect to the form that grief has taken in me. I have had to learn to control my anger in all of its forms. It seems to wash over me at the oddest times. It was really strong at first but less profound now after a few years. The largest source of the anger was the burning question, "WHY?" and the complete out of order flow of the way things should be.

I started off angry at the fact that my only daughter was gone from this earth forever. Later, when the shock started to wear off I was angry with myself for just being angry. I was angry with God for taking something so precious from me and angry with having that feeling in the first place (yet, thankful that God is big enough to handle my misplaced emotions). I never wanted to admit to this character flaw. I was too embarrassed until I heard others speak of the same thoughts at some of the Compassionate Friends meetings.

I was angry for all of the time that I did not devote to Kim when she was still alive, because of work or anything that took me away from my family. I was angry at the time we can never share together, like proms, graduation, wedding, or the birth of my possible grandchildren, etc. I was angry with myself for being so selfish, especially when I discovered that there were so many others in the same situation as me.

I wasted so much time being angry with people who complained about their children because they caused them a little inconvenience at times. I felt, "How lucky you are, you fool, you still have your children with you, alive!" Luckily I never said anything out loud. Yet, on the other hand, I was angry when I would see a Mom and Daughter

together, having fun, laughing, or hugging each other because I know that I can't have that anymore.

Grief brings on strong emotions and anger has just been one of them for me. I am glad to say that my anger is more under control now much less intense. I still have to "bite my tongue" now and then, and I try to be more cautious before I speak. When a parent is telling me how awful their child is behaving and upset at how to handle the problem, I try to listen with understanding, without saying something offensive like, "At least you have something to work with. With a living child, problems usually can be worked out."

I try to remind myself that the reason I feel angry is the actuality that Kim is gone now. I crave to be with Kim again and it is a hard thing to confront everyday. I try to keep the thoughts of the wonderful times Kim and I had together and remember the priceless gift I was given by being her Mom. I try to be more patient with myself and remember when I keep pleasant special thoughts in my mind, the anger disappears. I have more uplifting feelings when I think of the blessing of my daughter, Kim, and what she brought to my life, that can even be somewhat enjoyable.

Just like grief and pain, anger is something that you learn to deal with as time passes. Someone once said a very comforting statement, "We would not hurt so bad if we didn't love so much," and that is so true. I would not change the time I had with Kim and all that love we shared for all this pain if that meant never having her at all. My unwavering love over-shadows any of hurt and anger I may have to live with now.

--Bonnie Harris-Tibbs TCF, Richmond, VA

The Visit Home

There once was an old man who journeyed back to his hometown with the intent of reminiscing about the good times, as well as the sorrows he had experienced as a young father. High on the list of places he intended to visit was the elementary school his daughter had attended.

First he would walk around the huge playground where he so often had brought his daughter to play. He would stop at the slide, then the swings, and finally the monkey bars, remembering the joy on his daughter's face as she had moved happy and carefree from one adventure to another.



Then he would enter the school building. His first stop there would be the kindergarten room. He could still see in his mind that memorable day almost 75 years before, his daughter's outstretched hand enclosed in his firm, yet tender, grip. As they searched for her classroom, their loving touch finally ended as she walked through the open door to a new stage in her life.

The old man's next stop would be the tiny gymnasium where his daughter had performed in the holiday pageant. How beautiful she had appeared, dressed in soft white as she sang Silent Night, Holy Night.

Finally he would stop at his daughter's third grade classroom. The old man clearly remembered the day he and his wife had stood outside the closed classroom door, tears streaming down their cheeks. Finally, gathering their courage they entered the room to comfort and talk with their daughter's classmates who, as yet, failed to comprehend why they would never again see alive the little girl they all considered their best friend.

The anticipation grew strong as he neared the street where the school stood. Arriving at the spot, the old man wept at what he saw. The plain white concrete structure he expected was no longer there—a sleek modern building in its place. An asphalt parking lot now covered the old grassy playground.

Now understanding that he would never be able to fulfill his mission, the old man started thinking about the transient nature of life—how nothing ever remains the same. Communities change. Buildings are here today and gone tomorrow. Loved ones live—and die. Even nations rise and fall.

But then the old man had another thought: The love his daughter had passed onto him still remained within his heart—67 years after she had died. He realized that it truly didn't matter if a day, a year, a decade, or a century were to pass. The candle of love would continue to burn bright in his heart.

And he thought how even an eternity from now the love he still carried for his daughter would have transcended his own death and been returned to her a thousand fold.

The old man turned his car around to head back toward the highway. There was no need to stop elsewhere. Taking one last glance in the rear view mirror at the new school, he understood that memories live on not because of a building, or a

classroom, or a playground. They remain alive inside each of us because love outlasts even the sands of time.



A smile crossed his lips.
His mission had been completed!

--Wayne Loder

Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise. We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge.

I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger over-whelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm.

We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband. Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only

asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

--Pat Retzloff TCF Oshkosh, WI

The Legend of the Shamrock

A tiny lad called Patrick
 was at play beside the sea
 When he spied a four-leaf clover
 and he touched it tenderly.
 It brought blessings—some call luck;
 His love and wisdom grew!
 As a man he taught the meaning
 even little Patrick knew—
 For he'd seen the humble weed that day
 as a cross that never dies;
 A symbol of eternal life
 where God's own promise lies
 He still touches every shamrock
 each St. Patrick's Day to show
 That all of us are loved and blessed
 as long as shamrocks grow.
 --Coeur d'Alene, ID newsletter



The Seasons of Grief

Easter bunnies, brand-new clothes, egg hunts, candy and baskets – the start of spring. How exciting is this time of the year: a new beginning, everything so fresh and so invigorating! But unfortunately only painful and sorrowful memories are here for those of us who are bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. Gone is the laughter, the excitement in a special child's eyes, the feeling of a whole new aspect in life.

Spring is here and the world appears ready to be born again with new life, new hope, new wonders. How can we view life in this way when part of ourselves is now gone, forever lost to us? How can our lives continue to go on when one of us is missing, no longer able to share in this “newness” of life? It seems so unfair. And yet, out of our “darkness” comes the first signs of hope, a “bud” of survival, a moment of laughter, a memory of a happier time.

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

--Chris Gilbert

TCF Tampa, FL

Suicide

It's been two years, seven months and 15 days since my daughter died. By societal standards, I should be completely healed and moved on. I should mainly think of her on her birthday. That is the day I am allowed to dwell and be sad. By the morning of the next day, I must dust myself off and get back to life. This is not reality.

Thoughts of my daughter are ever-present. Yes, almost three years later. I'm as devastated as ever. This is not by a lack of effort to heal on my part. I've read books on healing and working through grief. I have and continue to see, my therapist. I participate heavily in charities that aid other bereaved families. I meditate frequently. I write to purge the thoughts and fears in my mind. I've done it all. Somehow I'm still destroyed.

I still have flashbacks of the moment I realized she died. Certain things can trigger me, and I will see her lifeless body in my mind. I could be

walking through the grocery store and suddenly the thought 'your daughter died' surges to the forefront of my mind.

It's a knife to my heart. At that moment I am crippled. I close my eyes tight to squeeze back the tears, smooth out the grimace on my face. Return my gaze to the apple in my hand and continue my shopping. I can cry in the car. This still happens almost three years later.

I frequently find myself in a state of irritation. I'm agitated, simmering on a low boil. I look forward to moments I feel content, moments I feel more like myself. I want to be that person more often. I long for that peace.

But there is still anger in me that I cannot seem to tap. Things that wouldn't normally irk me, do. People that don't usually annoy me are like nails on a chalkboard. It's as if my subconscious is looking for ways to get out this anger, anyway it can. How can they not always see how unfair it is that my baby died? This still happens almost three years later.

The irony is that I have an appreciation for my life that many others don't. I have such love for my family and friends that I could burst. I value each breath that I take and find overwhelming moments of joy.

But I'm still also sad. I'm still angry. I still miss my baby girl almost three years later. Grief and PTSD are no joke. They may be invisible to the world around us, but to those with it, it's incredibly debilitating. Light needs to shine on the struggles of bereaved parents. There are a lot of us. I feel that the more we learn, the more we can support each other. Outside of the loss community, I receive so little support from the majority of people around me. It's an uphill battle, but I'm still climbing.

Grief may transform and vary in intensity, but it remains. Grief is like love – it's for life. ♥

--<https://stillstandingmag.com/2015/03/20/grief-like-love/>

Dad's Cry Too

"Men often grieve differently to women, focusing primarily on their wife or partner who's going through the physical act of loss, before they consider their own emotions. The right support from family, friends and colleagues is vital in allowing men to grieve



fully, which in turn can help improve relationships and mental health.

How to help grieving fathers. Wondering how you might be able to help support a father going through baby loss? The Mariposa Trust suggests this advice:

1. Ask: Take time to actually ask them how they're coping, sleeping, etc.
2. Listen: When people go through loss, they often need to retell what's happened, and this is a crucial part of working through grief. Allow dads to talk and be the friend who's willing to listen, be it once, twice or 20 times.
3. Act: Provide practical support. When people go through loss, the last thing they think about is practical things like cooking, for instance. Take round some prepared meals that they only have to warm. If they have other children, perhaps you could do the school runs. Try to think of ways to make their lives easier without imposing yourself on them.
4. Understand: Grief is an ongoing journey and often comes in waves. Some days will be better than others. Sometimes things can seem quite settled, and then people are hit by another wave of grief. This is normal, so just stand alongside grieving dads through these times.

Things that won't help grieving dads

1. Don't presume: It's easy to see a father who's had to go back to work following the loss of his baby and think he's fine. But Clark-Coates warns that just because someone has to carry on with life doesn't mean they're okay or they've come to terms with their loss. Grieving is unique to each person and it may take weeks, months or even years for a father to come to terms with his loss.
2. Don't make platitudes: Comments like "At least you know you can get pregnant" and "At least the baby's in a better place" don't help at all, says Clark-Coates, who points out that no one knows if they can ever get pregnant again and that parents will always want their child in their arms. "Human nature often makes us want to look for the positives, but when it comes to death and grief, the only person who should be making 'at least' statements is the person who's bereaved," he says.
3. Don't make grieving dads rush: Allow them the time they need to process and come to terms with what they've gone through.

--The Compassionate Friends Quakertown PA

Newly Bereaved...

When You are Bereaved

It Is All Right To
 Scream in the shower.
 Yell in the car.
 Howl at the moon.
 Cry anywhere you like.
 Misplace your glasses.
 Lose the car.
 Forget your own name.
 Put milk in the cupboard,
 Toilet paper in the refrigerator,
 And ice cream in the oven.
 Beat up on a pillow
 Stomp on the ground.
 Throw stones in a lake.
 Change grocery stores if it hurts.
 Wear one black shoe and one navy.
 Have tear stains on your tie
 Eat french fries for breakfast,
 Toast for lunch
 And peanut butter for dinner
 (as long as you eat).
 Write him a letter.
 Bake him a cake.
 Smell his clothes.
 Celebrate his life on his birthday.
 Talk to your pets; they understand.
 Leave his room the way it is
 For as long as you like.
 Say his name just to hear the sound.
 Talk about him to others.
 Tell loved ones what you need.
 Say no when you feel like it.
 Cancel plans if you want.
 Have a bad day.
 It's all right to hurt.
 And one day, when you're ready,
 It's all right to laugh again.
 Dance and feel pretty.
 Have a good time.
 Look forward to tomorrow.
 Sing in the shower.
 Smile at a friend's new baby.
 Wear make-up once more.
 Go for a day, a week,
 And even a month without crying.
 Celebrate the holidays.
 Forgive those who failed you.
 Learn something new.

Look at his pictures
 And remember with happiness,
 Not pain.
 Go on with your life.
 Cherish the memories.
 And one day when it's time--
 It's all right
 To love again!
 --Vicki Tushingam

Seasoned Greivers....

Morning Thoughts

The morning walk from the bus to work takes 10 minutes. It is my opportunity to plumb random thoughts in my head to see what's cooking on the inside. This morning I thought about an upcoming wedding for my sweet, talented niece. The couple has selected a gorgeous venue in the High Sierras for their celebration.

The women will wear long, swirling gowns. Mine is already hanging in the closet. I will dance with my new partner, Scott. I look forward to that light, airy moment when the dancing begins.

I would have danced at this wedding with my son Art had he lived to see that day. Five years ago I would have danced with Art at his sister Jessica's wedding had he lived to see that day. My son's sudden death eight years ago broke me. My spouse's death four years later hurt me. Somehow I reassembled to live life fully. I would not be defined by their deaths. Role models were there aplenty at monthly TCF meetings. I wanted to be like them.

I learned that a grief journey is unique and dynamic. It was not quick or easy, but today my life is thrilling again and fulfilling. I still grieve and always will.

Someday, in a different form, I will dance with my son. That will be a celebration too. I miss him; at times to a breaking point. In the calm moments of my day, I hold my son and my husband in my heart and I live in the present moment.

--Monica Colberg, Art's Mom TCF Minneapolis MN

Friends and Family...

Listening can turn grief into growth. We do not take grief away from people, we simply help them walk through it - by talking it out. They need to talk



to a good listener. A good listener is a walking, touching, personal Intensive Care Unit.

--Doug Manning, Comforting Those Who Grieve

Helpful Hint...



The truth is, that hole in your heart shaped exactly the size and shape of your child
WILL NEVER, EVER GO AWAY.

But the love that oozes from it has more power to change the world than anything I've ever known.

--Angela Miller

Book In Review...



A Time to Grieve by Carol Staudacher. For those of you who find it difficult to concentrate right now, this helpful little guide might be a good beginning. You can just flip through the pages and select a topic or check the list in the index. The headings for these short meditations remind me of titles for workshops at TCF national conferences. Some will speak to you more than others, or during different phases of your grief.

Perhaps you are in the early phase of "retreating" and are in shock and disbelief. Then you come to a page with the quote, "My whole world has fallen apart." The few short paragraphs help you reflect on how your world has changed. When you get to the "working through" phase, the quote, "I need to tell my story over and over" will help you understand how each time you tell your story, you remove another small bit of hurt inside you.

--Pat Brown TCF Minneapolis

Welcome...



Welcome New Members

As a general rule, we tend to shy away from becoming a member of a group or organization of which we know very little. That is especially true at a time when we are probably at the most vulnerable time of our lives...when our minds are still trying to make sense of what has happened to us and decisions, large and small, are being demanded of us. At some point in time when reality begins to set in, we start to think of survival and picking up the pieces of what used to be our lives. And then we hear about The Compassionate Friends.

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

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

--Kirkland WA TCF

Tears in Season

I was down, all the way below the bottom of the bottom.

I don't know how I got up.

I remember weeping a long time, until someone wept with me.

Then my weeping stopped.

--Marilyn Phemister TCF, Rockford, IL

Spring Is Not Far Away

There is a smell of growing things about.

The snow looks somehow even more perishable now.

Spring is not far away -

And memories move to another place,
Remembering: a squeaky swing in the garden,
going back and forth,
back and forth...

Remembering a bicycle taken out for its first ride...

Remembering: incredibly wet boots,
cold hands, kissing-fresh face...

So many things remembered,
How many lost?

Not one, not one.

The heart remembers always.

Spring is not far away.

~ Sascha Wagner

Learn from those who have experienced healing after loss.

Their survival is reassuring proof that you too will endure.

—author unknown



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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mark Edler
Born: 11/73 Died: 1/92
Parents: Kitty & Rich Edler

Gregory Robert Ehrlich
Born: 4/91 Died: 2/19
Mother: Sarah Ott

Lorian Tamara Elbert
Born: 5/66 Died: 10/07
Mother: Dorota Starr
Elbert

Bettina Mia Embry
Born: 8/65 Died: 4/22
Parents: Larry & Elena
Bruns

Jeffery Mark Engleman
Born: 6/61 Died: 2/10
Parents: Janette & Laszlo
Engelman

Richard Paul Engelman
Born: 02/66 Died: 03/95
Parents: Janette & Laszlo
Engelman

Cody Jarod Esphorst
Born: 3/02 Died: 7/19
Parents: Jesse & Julie
Esphorst

Jesse Eric Esphorst
Born: 9/00 Died: 3/17
Parents: Jesse & Julie
Esphorst

Chidinma Ezeani
Born: 8/89 Died: 10/19
Mother: Ifeoma Ezeani

Robert Justin Fields
Born: 1/00 Died: 1/22
Parents: Loree & Bob
Fields



Shawn Eric Fillion
Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21
Mother: Lise Fillion

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

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

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

Michella Leanne Matasso Fincannon
Born: 8/86 Died: 1/06
Parents: Bill & Cheryl Matasso

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

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

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

Bryce Patrick Fisher
Born: 10/86 Died: 8/21
Mother: Nancy Goodson

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

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

Violet Anna Lo
Born: 1/24 Died: 1/24
Parents: Brian & Jo

Miles Andrew Gallas
Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21
Mother: Denise Gallas

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

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

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

Mark Scott Galper
Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97
Mother: Sheri Waldstein

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lexie Rose Gilpin
Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09
Mother: Michele Gilpin

Alexander John Jacobs
Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19
Mother: Diane Jacobs

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

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

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

Stefanie Jacobs
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97
Father: Rob Jacobs

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

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

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

Jason Christopher Jenkins
Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20
Parents: Alvin & Caprice Jenkins

Bryan Yutaka Lee
Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07
Mother: Kathee Lee

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

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

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

Steven J. Lee
Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06
Mother: Donna Lee

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

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

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

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

Travis Frederick Marton
Born: 10/91 Died: 1/15
Mother: Ricki Marton

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

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

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

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

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



Matthew "Matty" Louis
Matich
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley
Matich, Grandmother:
Dorothy Matich

Max McCardy
Born: 4/05 Died 8/15
Parents: Derk & Akemi
McCardy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keith Moilanen
Born: 10/80 Died: 5/19
Mother: Jill Moilanen

Reyna Joanne Monje
Born 9/98 Died: 4/21
Mother: Debbie Trutanich

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

Dominic Pennington
Roque
Born: 8/02 Died: 9/09
Parents: Kerrie & Ren
Roque

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

Antonio Perez Prisco
Born: 11/72 Died: 4/22
Sister: Scheilla Perez

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

Spencer Simpson
Born: 1/80 Died: 6/13
Parents: Rich & Shelly Simpson

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

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

Aaron Rico
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10
Parents: Cameron & Annette Rico

Nicholas M Sinclair
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22
Mother: Suzanne Sinclair

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

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

Bryant Alfredo Rodriguez
Born: 7/95 Died: 10/20
Father: Alfredo Rodriguez

Paul Slater
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

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

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

John Patrick Rouse
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02
Mother: Sharon Rouse

Dale Lee Soto
Born: 7/94 Died: 5/11
Mother: Monique Soto

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

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

Michael B. Ruggera, Jr.
Born: 4/51 Died: 4/96
Parents: Michael & Frances Ruggera

Patrik Stezinger
Born: 1/89 Died: 8/17
Parents: Paul & Rosemary Mosher

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

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

Danny Ryan
Born: 07/79 Died: 10/15
Parents: Mike & Andrea Ryan

Jonathan David Streisand
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13
Parents: Pricilla & David Streisand

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

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

Andrew Patrick Sakura
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08
Parents: Bruce & Karen Sakura

Brittany Anne Suggs
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/16
Mother: Camille Suggs

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

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

Daniela Mora Saldana
Born: 3/17 Died: 3/17
Mother: Rosa Saldana

Elizabeth D. Szucs
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11
Parents: Dolores & Frank Szucs

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

* 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.

Lisa Sandoval
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92
Parents: Susan & Ruben Sandoval

Kenneth Tahan
Born: 2/66 Died: 7/16
Parents: Shirley & Joseph Tahan

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

Birthday Tributes



Phillip Ruben Sandoval
Born: 7/84 - Died: 6/16
Parents: Valerie & Joe Desjardin

Anthony Tanori
Born: 8/82 Died: 8/12
Parents: Chuck & Sylvia Tanori

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

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

Andrew Sankus
Born: 4/71 Died: 8/15
Mother: Mary Sankus

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

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

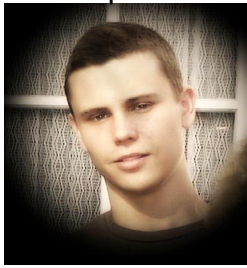
Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

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

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

birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.

A Birthday Tribute to Alex J. Mantyla Mar. 1989 - Aug. 2008



Happy Birthday, Alex!

This year you would be 35. We still enjoy the joyful memories of you growing up. Everything from your exciting skateboard antics, your home-made go cart to the simple pleasures of going to the beach. We also remember the excitement of vacations with friends and relatives, whether camping in the Sequoias, visiting Sea World in San Diego or longer trips overseas.

As you would have entered your adult years, we imagine you doing similar things with your own family. Maybe we would have tagged along to see you enjoy similar trips with your own kids.

You were everything and more that we could have ever wanted in a son. We feel your presence always. Thanks for watching over us.

Love, Mom and Dad

For Siblings...



Find Someone To Talk To About Your Grief

Finding someone to talk with following the death of your brother or sister may be one of the best ways to cope with the loss. It really doesn't matter who that person is, as long as you can be open and honest in conveying your feelings. It would be terrific if this person could be a parent or a surviving brother or sister, because sharing your loss and going through the grief process together can make you stronger as a family. But often other members of the family are facing their own struggles with the grief process, and may not be able to open up with you. Sometimes it is difficult to share your own feelings with other family members because of the emotions this can bring on.

Tears are often difficult for us to handle because as surviving siblings, we may feel guilty for causing someone else to have "a bad day." We may interpret the other person's tears to mean that our deceased sibling is more important than we

are, or that we must compete with them for our parents attention. If you can't talk with your parents or a surviving sibling, talking with another person who has experienced the death of a brother or sister may be the next best thing. One of the hardest things to do after a sibling dies is to create a life for yourself that will not include your brother or sister. You are going to:

- continue going to work or school
- fight back the tears when that special favorite song comes on the radio
- run to the phone to call your brother or sister—only to realize no one will answer
- think that you see your sibling in a crowd
- have to answer for the first time the question: "How many brothers and sisters do you have?"

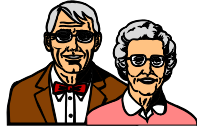
Others around you may not understand these things, but someone who has had a brother or sister die knows what this is like. They, too, have sat at a red light, crying their eyes out. They, too, may wear their sibling's clothes. They, too, may look to date someone who knew their brother or sister. Although no one can know exactly what you are going through (because no one will have the same relationship you had with your brother or sister), someone whose sibling died has probably gone through many of the same experiences you are going through. It helps to hear that what you're going through is "normal." It helps to talk about what's going on in your life now.

You may feel it helpful to talk with a counselor or therapist. As an objective third party trained in dealing with the bereavement process, they may be able to help you through what will probably be a very difficult time. They may be able to provide you with insights you may not get from family or friends.

But perhaps one of the best ways to find someone to talk with is to come to the National Conference of The Compassionate Friends. Each year, 200 to 400 surviving siblings ten years of age or older journey to the TCF conference. There are many activities at the conference for surviving siblings: workshops, sharing sessions, a hospitality room with free drinks and snacks, a sibling lunch or dance, and much more. For 3 days, you get to be with hundreds of people who understand what you're going through, who accept you as you are, and who give you the opportunity to talk as much or as little as you like. Often times many surviving siblings will exchange phone numbers and addresses to stay in touch throughout the year. Regardless of who you find to talk with, talk with

someone— because talking helps!-- Mary A. Paulson PhD, Worthington, OH Bereaved sibling, and Child and adolescent psychologist Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone

For Grandparents...



The Little Bear Who Lost His Boy

Once upon a time there was a little bear whose name was Ted. He was a very special little bear, for his was the best boy in the whole world... well, at least in the Beforetime. Today, you see, he was a sad little bear. He sat at the side of the road and looked as though a tear would drown him. He was the scruffiest, mufftiest little bear you ever did see and just by looking at him you would never know how special he was. It just so happened that Nana Bear was walking down the street on her way to town when she saw Little Ted looking ever so sad, and stopped to talk to him.

"Why are you so sad, Little Ted?" said Nana Bear kindly. "You used to be the happiest little bear in the land."

"That was in the Beforetimes," answered Little Ted, sad-as-sad could be. "I don't have my boy any more. I've lost him. I'm never going to find him again, and I am so unhappy."

"Well," said Nana Bear. "Suppose you tell me all about it." And she sat down on the tree stump by the side of the road, settling herself in quite comfortably, and waited for Ted to tell her his story. But he didn't say a word. "What was your boy's name?" asked Nana Bear. She knew quite well what the boy's name was, for everyone had known what a special boy he had been. But she wanted to hear Little Ted say his name.

"Nigel," answered Ted, and he hiccupped. A big tear started to roll down his face, and straight away he stopped it, and was Very Very Brave.

"Why, Little Ted, whatever are you doing?" asked Nana Bear, very puzzled, seeing the tear stop rolling in an instant on Ted's face, freezing like concrete on a very hot day.

"I'm being Very Very Brave," answered Little Ted, bravely. "Very Brave," he added on, just to make sure she knew what a good little bear he was being.

"Well," said Nana Bear. "But WHY are you being Very Very Brave? It doesn't look like it makes you very happy, and I am sure I don't know what good of a thing being Very Very Brave is if it doesn't make you happy."

"The Bear by the Field said I must," said Little Ted, wisely. "He said that losing your boy can be Very Very Hard and I must be Very Very Brave."

"Oh," said Nana Bear, thoughtfully. "Tell me, Little

Ted, what else did the Bear by the Field tell you?"

"Well," said Little Ted, remembering as best as he could, "He said that I would get another boy soon and that would make everything better."

"Oh," said Nana Bear, even more thoughtfully. "And would it make everything better if you got another boy right away?"

Little Ted sat mournfully. "No one could ever be the best boy that Nigel was. He was wonderful and he loved me ever so much. I don't think any other boy would ever be as good."

"Aha," said Nana Bear, "I see. What else did the Bear by the Field tell you?"

"He said that I would feel much better soon. It's just a matter of time, he said, just a matter of time. But I don't want to forget Nigel. I want to remember what a nice boy he was. Does that mean in time I will forget all about him?"

"Oh, I don't think so, Little Ted," said Nana Bear. "When you love someone as much as you loved Nigel, I don't think you'll ever forget him. What else did the Bear by the Field say?"

"He didn't," said Little Ted, sadly. "I wanted to talk about Nigel and he didn't. I said I wished I had my boy back, and he said he thought the corn would grow nicely. I said I wanted to remember my boy forever and he said what nice weather we are having. I suppose that all the bears are tired of hearing me talk about my boy."

"Oh Little Ted," said Nana Bear, "come up here this very instant and not a second longer."

Little Bear climbed up on Nana Bear's lap. He was very glad to be there because it was hard being Very Very Brave all the time, and it was so good to have someone hug and cuddle him again. He did not realize what an all-alone feeling it had been without his boy to hug him and kiss him. He snuggled down in Nana Bear's lap, his heart aching for the missing of Nigel.

"Should I tell you what I think, Little Ted?" she said softly as she stroked his little bear head. "I think that Nigel would want you to cry if you were sad. If Nigel was peeking from behind those bushes and saw your Very Very Brave face, why, he might not even know it was you. "And I will tell you what else I think... Maybe one day you will find another boy to love and who will love you very much. But the little soft fuzzy spot in your heart that belongs to Nigel will always be just for him and not for your new boy. Your new boy will have his very own place in your heart just for him. "Time is a taker of many things, but not a taker of heartache. All the time in the world will not stop you missing Nigel. But time cannot steal your memories and cannot take away all the good times you ever had in your whole lives together."

"And Little Ted, of course you must talk about him.



You loved him so much, and it would be hard not to talk about him. You can pick your very good friends who loved him too, and you can talk about him together. And there's a spot right here on my lap whenever Nigel thoughts needs to be spoken."

"Oh thank you, Nana Bear," breathed Little Ted softly. "Thank you so much for telling me that. And Nana Bear, tell me just one more thing—can I be happy again one day? Will I be sad for my boy forever?"

"Oh what a wonderful thing that will be when you have happy thoughts," said Nana Bear. "After all, you have only lost your boy for a short while. Boys aren't like socks in the dryer, never to be seen again. In the Big Cloud in the Sky, in the Aftertimes, you will see him again. In the meantime, you have to love the world for him because he cannot do it by himself anymore. When you see the little butterfly flying around, you must look at it for your boy, and laugh for him and dance with it for him. You must live all the happiness left in the world and store it up in your heart to take for him when you see him again. When you are ready, you can begin to store those happy thoughts, Little Ted, when you are ready."

And a big tear rolled down Little Ted's face, and another and another. Pretty soon, there were so many tears he made a puddle, and the puddle made a bath. Pretty soon, Ted was all wet and before you know it, he was clean as a whistle and didn't look anything like the scruffiest-muffiest bear he had been before.

And his tears had made the flowers grow, and the butterflies come, and before you knew it the world was clean and sparkling and wonderful again.

Did Little Ted ever stop missing his boy? Oh, no, never in a million years. But he learned that it is a fine thing to cry and get the fur all nice and clean, and he learned that tears grow flowers and flowers bring butterflies. And Little Ted learned that one day, in a long and far-off time, a bear and his boy would see each other again, but until that time he would keep his eye out for joy--things to store up and take as a great and wonderful gift to the best boy who ever lived in this whole wide world.

—Joseph Farrugia,

www.geocities.com/heartland/2167bear.htm

From Our Members...



A boy was flying his kite. He kept adding more spools of string to make it go higher. A woman walked by and said, "You have that kite flying high." And the boy agreed. The woman left and went about her business. On her way back, she looked up toward the kite and said, "I do not see your kite" The boy agreed. She asked, "Then why don't you let it go?"

The boy answered "I can't. I can still feel it tugging". This is the plight of bereaved parents --TCF of Tilton, GA Submitted by Linda Curtis

The Compassionate Friends 47th National Conference...

Will take place July 12th to 14th, 2024 in New Orleans, LA

More information is available online at <http://compassionatefriends.org>



Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, 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 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: March first for April birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



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

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

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

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

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



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

Phone Friends ... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, 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)		M.A.D.D..org
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 Mueller
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 Alex J. Mantyla March 1989 - August 2008. Happy Birthday!
Love, Mom, Dad, and Family

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 _____

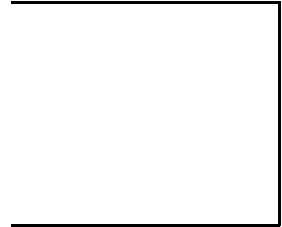
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
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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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