



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

April 2024 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be April 4th, 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, April 4th meeting will start with "The Semantics 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, April 4th meeting will start with “The semantics of grief.”** We become survivors as we acknowledge that “It is hard to lose a child.” “Its reasonable to hurt.” and “Healing takes time.” The depth of our sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Call it what you want (it’s the meaning behind the word that counts) but we don’t recover, accept or overcome the unacceptable. Instead we adjust, examine and learn to tolerate and acknowledge this immense loss. We make a conscious effort to let go of the guilt, what if’s, self doubts, and pain as we rebuild our lives after the death of a child. Through trial and error we learn to adjust to our great loss and live with their absence. Just as we had to learn how to be a parent, we now have to learn how to be a “bereaved parent”...to accept our “new normal” as it evolves. We do this by remembering our child’s entire lives and not just the horror of their death. It is not an act of disloyalty to begin to go on with our lives. Grieving the death of a child is the hardest work you will ever do. But sadly, no one but you, can do it. We invite you to join us as we share our hopes and memories with each other.

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF: We Don't Recover From Grief, And That's Okay

by Eleanor Haley

(After some discussion with our insightful readers, we're adding a brief preface to this article. We feel it's important to clarify up-front that when we say we don't recover from grief or experience “grief recovery”, we do NOT mean that we don't recover from the intense pain of loss. It is important for all grieving people - despite their loss and experiences - to believe in the hope for healing. No one should expect to live with the anguish associated with acute grief forever.

Our belief is that grief encompasses more than just pain. We believe that over time grief changes shape and involves many different experiences and emotions - some of these experiences may be painful - like a milestone or the anniversary of a loved one's death - but some of them may be comforting - like warm memories and the enduring role that your loved one plays in your life. With that, the original article is presented below.

I need to tell you that, in the face of significant loss, we don’t “recover” from grief. Yes, I’m using the royal “we” because you and I are all a part of this club. I also need to tell you that, not recovering

from grief doesn’t doom you to a life of despair. Let me reassure you, there are millions of people out there, right now, living normal and purposeful lives while also experiencing ongoing grief.

All the things you've heard about getting over grief, going back to normal, and moving on – they are misrepresentations of what it means to love someone who has died. I'm sorry, I know us human-people appreciate things like closure and resolution, but this isn't how grief goes. This isn't to say that “recovery” doesn't have a place in grief—it's simply “what” we're recovering from that needs to be redefined.

To “recover” means to return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength, and as many would attest, when someone very significant dies, we never return to a pre-loss “normal”. The loss, the person who died, our grief – they all get integrated into our lives and they profoundly change how we live and experience the world.

What will hopefully, return to a general baseline, is the level of intense emotion, stress, and distress that a person experiences in the weeks and months following their loss. So perhaps we recover from the intense distress of grief, but we



don't recover from the grief itself. Now you could say that I'm getting caught up in semantics, but sometimes semantics matter.

Especially, when trying to describe an experience that, for so many, is unfamiliar and frightening. Grief is one of those experiences you can never fully understand until you actually experience it and, until that time, all a person has to go on is what they've observed and what they've been told.

The words we use to label and describe grief matter and, in many ways, these words have been getting us into trouble for decades. In the context of grief, words like denial, detachment, unresolved, recovery, and acceptance (to name a few) could be interpreted many different ways and some of these interpretations offer false impressions and false promises.

Interestingly, when many of these words were first used by grief theorists starting in the early 20th century, their intent was to help describe grief. I have no doubt that in the contexts in which they were working, these words and their operational definitions were useful and effective. It's when these descriptions reach our broader society without explanation or nuance, or when they are

misapplied by those who position themselves as experts – that they go terribly awry.

So going back to the beginning, we don't recover from grief after the loss of someone significant. Grief is born when someone significant dies – and as long as that person remains significant – grief will remain.

Ongoing grief is normal, not dysfunctional. It's also not dysfunctional to experience unpleasant grief-related thoughts and emotions from time-to-time sometimes even years later. Humans are meant to experience both sides of the emotional spectrum - not just the warm and fuzzy half. As grieving people, this is especially true. Where there are things like love, appreciation, and fond memory, there will also be sadness, yearning, and pain. And though these experiences seem in opposition to one another, we can experience them all at the same time.

Sure, people may push you to stop feeling the pain, but this is misguided. If the pain always exists, it makes sense, because there will never come a day when you won't wish for one more moment, one more conversation, one last hello, or one last goodbye. You learn to live with these wishes and you learn to accept that they won't come true - not here on Earth - but you still wish for them.

And let me reassure you, experiencing pain doesn't negate the potential for healing. With constructive coping and maybe a little support, the intensity of your distress will lessen and your healing will evolve over time. Though there will be many ups and downs, you should eventually reach a place where you're having just as many good days as bad...and then perhaps more good days than bad...until one day you may find that your bad grief days are few and far between.

But the grief, it's always there, like an old injury that aches when it rains. And though this prospect may be scary in the early days of grief, I think in time you'll find that you wouldn't have it any other way. Grief is an expression of love - these things grow from the same seed. Grief becomes a part of how we love a person despite their physical absence; it helps connect us to memories of the past; it bonds us with others through our shared humanity, and it helps provide perspective on our immense capacity for finding strength and wisdom in the most difficult of times.

For more timely articles and insights, go to:
www.whatsyourgrief.com

Declan



When Declan first passed, I counted the days from when I'd last seen him alive. Every day was an unbearable day further away. The chasm ever widening with no chance to close it up again. I was, for so long, focused on that "before" point in time. Walking backward into my own future while staring at the past as though I might catch one last glimpse, change one slight detail, undo what was irrevocably done. I think newly bereaved parents all do this to some extent. There is no simple way to simply turn around and march on into the future without looking back. Leaving behind our dearest love... It is just heartbreaking—again and again.

Waking in the morning and experiencing the gut-punch of that first realization this will be another day without them. It took me so very long — years— to slowly yet resolutely turn around. To seize my life and loved ones in this world again. To accept the reality and finality of Declan's death.

Honestly it took quite a bit of therapy also. To over-come the feelings of guilt— that I was betraying his memory, forgetting him, hardening my heart to not feel. To simply smile made me feel this way. How could I smile ever again when my child was dead? Plenty of non-bereaved were too eager to suggest, coax or downright demand that I 'move on'. Admonishing me that "Declan wouldn't want you to be 'miserable'!" Usually they'd never met Declan... I had to dialogue this one internally at length to reconcile it.

I was quite certain Declan would feel wretched if I wasn't affected by his passing. He would feel unloved and insignificant. We want to be missed and remembered when we are gone—this is why people go to great lengths to create legacy with their families. Mourning is a healthy natural and good thing. The 'do-gooders' with their unsolicited advice had a nugget of truth though—even wrapped in such an abrasive and insensitive delivery. Declan wouldn't want me to spend the rest of my entire life focused only on him and his death. He wouldn't want me to be physically present but emotionally absent for his sisters. I did need to regain some balance, find my smile and work toward being as loving to those here as I was to the one absent. The heart of it—pun intended—was that I could love Declan without being miserable. I could find my ways to love him, honor his memory, talk about him, be active in

fund-raising, be active at work, as a parent, in church, with friends and family without needing to shout from the rooftops and demand recognition that I am a bereaved mom.

If I choose to not share with someone about Declan or his passing or any of that, it is ok. None of those things determine or define or measure my love for him. My love for him is in the very fiber of my soul, my being, my body, my consciousness, my mind—my very existence. Not one thing can take that away. I will always love him. This is the focus I hope for you—that you can focus on the love for your child and how it cannot be destroyed.

Grieving has no timetable, no ordered list of what to do and no rules on how. You must ‘do the work’ and find your way to love, honor, remember and grieve your child in your way. You can absolutely get ideas from others—which is why meetings with The Compassionate Friends can be so very healing. None of us studied for this ‘test’ - so its incredibly fortunate to be able to get answers to the hard questions from friends. You will find grieving your child is a lifelong process that grows and changes with time. Allow for this. Expect this. Be at peace with this. Be gentle with yourselves.

--Penny, Declan’s Mom
Kirkland WA Eastside TCF”

Letters To My Son, Andrew

A father deals with grief over his son’s death by writing letters to the boy.



You introduce yourself to me, the solitary stranger in the cafeteria. You’re just being friendly. In the course of conversation, you ask, “How many children do you have?” And you are slightly disconcerted when I hesitate. Don’t I know how many children I have? The answer, when it comes, is a shock. “I have three children, two living and one deceased.” And now what do you say? This is your unspoken question; I hear it in your uncomfortable shifting in your seat and the disappearance of your smile.

My 8-year-old son, Andrew, was hit by an SUV and killed in May of 1988 and the not-so-subtle message from our society to those of us who are grieving is, “Just get over it. It doesn’t do any good to dwell on the past. I wish you’d live in the present.” But we are changed forever by those we love in life and equally by their passing. And so, it has not, in fact, been a long time since Andrew died. The experience of that day 28 years ago

lives timelessly in my heart. From then on, I was left to try to make sense of what defied reason, to accept what was unacceptable. Part of me knew that Andrew was gone, and yet another part reeled in disbelief—and still does. I often feel that I stand with one foot in each of two worlds, this living reality, and the unknown beyond, mourning for two: Andrew and myself.

To avoid total emotional isolation, I sought companionship from trusted friends and group support from others who suffered losses. I learned that shared tears are far less salty than solitary ones and that open expression lessens the pain of grief. In telling our stories, we learn that we have more in common than we have differences. And, perhaps, most of all, we learned that we are not alone.

I listened to others’ stories, and I learned to care again—to allow someone new a place in my still fearful heart. And I learned what truly endures in this uncertain existence: “it is a glimpse of play out an open window, a knowing smile at bedtime, a sleepy head resting on a shoulder, a sigh of contentment, a cheerful wave hello. It is a moment of warmth, a secret shared breathlessly, a casual glance that says nothing in particular, but says all. It is a quick impression, a flash of pride, a stolen hug, a silent tear. It is a thousand such moments, each of them a heartbeat, all of them a lifetime. It is what we were to each other. It is what we are to each other. It is all that happened. It is all that didn’t.

I wrote those words to my son in one of many letters meant to keep our relationship alive and to help find myself again. Those letters have now been published as a book called “Dear Andrew” Over the years, I have evolved so that my grief is no longer as raw as it once was. Rather, it has settled like a fluid in every cell in my body, and seeks balance with my every thought and movement. “I’m all right now,” I wrote Andrew. Perhaps this is what it means to heal.

Still, your cafeteria question is not simple. Grief is not simple.

– Robert Goor Lifted with thanks from Queensland Chapter Newsletter TCF

You Think...

You think it won’t happen to you, but it does. You think your life could never be this way, but it is. You think you should have recognized that he was dying, but you didn’t.

You think your grief is so huge that you'll forget to breathe, but you don't.
 You think the sun will forget to come up, but it doesn't.
 You think the tears will stop coming, but they don't.
 You think you can't handle the pain, but you do.
 You think you'll lose hope, but you don't. You think you'll never be happy again, but you will.
 You think you'll be alone forever, but you won't.
 You think that you'll never laugh again, but you do.
 You think you can't live without them, but you learn how.
 --Angelia King, TCF/Seattle-King County

Grief Work Is:

- Allowing the pain of grief to engulf your spirit.
- Taking one more breath when part of you wants to die.
- Getting up in the morning when your body feels like it weighs a thousand pounds and couldn't possibly move.
- Eating delicious food and finding it tasteless.
- Putting clothes and makeup on without a reason.
- Putting thought into a decision that affects others when you couldn't care less.
- Returning to everyday activities when only a part of you is really there.
- Going through the treasures of your child's life and death —
- And then talking about something else — for a while

If you have done any of these, your "grief work" has begun. When does it end? After seven years the load is lighter. I am comfortable with that.
 --N. Green TCF, Oakbrook, IL

September 14, 1999

How much I have learned since that horrendous day. I've learned that I'm not alone in my grief, That others have suffered, are suffering and will suffer the tremendous loss of losing someone they love to suicide. Two years later I also learned how grief can destroy. When your father, who couldn't deal with his grief, decided to end his pain and suffering too.

I've learned I wasn't as guilty as I had thought at first. That your decisions was yours alone, That once made nobody could change it. And I've learned to stop asking the "Why?" question—

That question to which only you have the answer.

Some people said that I'd get over losing you in a year. After that first round of holidays, birthdays— I'd be fine. Guess what—I've learned just how wrong they were. It's now the 10th year—the 10th year of holidays, birthdays— Certainly it's not as heart-wrenching as the 1st year or even the 5th. But I'm still not over losing you and I'm still not "fine." And I doubt that I'll ever get over losing you, that I'll ever be "fine."

I'm certainly not the same person I was before this all began. I guess I've reached a "new normal" though and I'm going on with life. Even though it's been the most difficult thing I've ever had to endure. At least now I'm strong enough to help those who follow on this path.

But, oh, how I'd give up all I've learned for just another hour with you.

--Karen C. Kimball, TCF Hingham, MA

The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost an Infant

To experience the loss of an infant is to grieve for what never was. After all the months of anticipation and preparation, the actual birth of a child brings the feeling of hope and fulfillment. Should the child be stillborn, or die hours, days or even months later, the unrealized dreams become a source of pain for parents. No parent ever expects to outlive his child; the death of an infant is often the loss of a child unknown even to his parents. The expected stages of grief (guilt, disbelief, anger, etc.) can have new directions for the parents who have lost an infant.

1. Shame and Guilt - Especially if the infant was stillborn or had a birth defect, the mother may feel she has failed as a woman. "Other women have live, normal babies, why can't I?" Should an infant die months after birth, parents find it hard to resolve feelings that it was their fault.

2. No Memories - Parents may only have "souvenirs of the occasion" (birth certificate, I.D. bracelet) by which to remember their child. If the infant is older, they may have pictures and a few belongings, but they still feel they hadn't really gotten to know their child.

3. Loneliness in Grief - It is hard for friends and relatives to share your grief for a child they never knew. If the child is newborn, they may give the impression you are grieving unnecessarily, they hope you can "forget this baby" and "have another

Grief is work,
 avoiding grief is
 even more
 work.
 David Kessler.
 Grief.com

one."

4. Neglected Fathers - Too often the sympathies of professionals and friends are directed mainly to the mother. It is important to remember that the father had made plans for this baby, too.

5. Mothers vs. Fathers - Since the mother has bonded with her child during the pregnancy, her grief may be much deeper than the father's, who only came to know this child after birth. It may be difficult for a father to understand why his wife's grief is so profound and so prolonged.

--Claire McGaughey and Sue Shelley TCF St. Louis, MO

Newly Bereaved...

The Storms Of Grief

It comes like a huge thunderbolt—shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that had been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope. The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come and you are torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passerbys can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it—and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand and try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones—the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know the storm can be survived.

After a time, the torrential rains turn to slow showers, and the then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain, but they become more bearable. Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow—a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe, as they get farther apart, the sky will get bluer; we will see more rainbows; and the flowers will bloom more and more.

Perhaps it is even good to have a shower now and then—to cleanse our souls and to revive those special flowers of memory.

--Mary Jo Pierce TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

Seasoned Greivers...

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," Elisa Glatz reported. "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 Californian, Deborah Ryan, 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 Wayne Montgomery of South Carolina, whose sixteen-year-old son, Richard, 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 anymore." 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 Malibu realtor Paul Grisanti 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.

--Candy Lightner

Looking Forward...

OPTION B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy

by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant



Although Sheryl's grief story is about the loss of her husband, and each loss is personal and unique, we all face the challenge of finding purpose, meaning, and joy again. When grieving a major loss, it is painfully clear that "option A" is no longer available. We can't get our child or sibling back. We have to face that reality and try our hardest to make the best of "option B."

Our loved ones changed us by their presence, and now we are realizing how profoundly they continue to change us by their absence. The tools Sheryl and Adam provide, are not all that different from other grief books, but I found it helpful to contemplate her idea of "post-traumatic growth." We have heard of PTSD, but Sheryl says that she has actually grown and become more grateful, more present, more alive, and more aware of how precious and short life is.

In my early days of grief, ideas like that didn't make a lot of sense to me, but over time, I have come to see signs of growth in myself also. I appreciate things that I used to take for granted. I can have fun and laugh again. I can find little moments of joy each day, and this focus helps me move in a positive direction. I believe that we all gain perspective on what is really important, and when we search for ways to do good things, our actions can become part of our child's impact on the world. This book might inspire you on your journey to an "option B" that is potentially better than you envisioned before.

--Pat Brown TCF Minneapolis Chapter

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*

Friends And Family...

If I Could Just See Hope

If I could just see hope. If I knew what to look for or how to act or feel. If only the pain would stop. But we cannot erase this pain; that is the price we pay for love. The pain of this darkness will always be with us. But it can change its intensity and its depth. It can change its color, but only with our efforts. No one can make this journey for us. We must travel this path ourselves, but perhaps we do not have to go alone.

So, come with me in search of hope. Perhaps somewhere within these words will be the flicker of light that you've been seeking. We are always in search of hope, in search of that magical moment when we REMEMBER FIRST THAT OUR LOVED ONE LIVED. Hope isn't a place or thing. Hope is not the absence of pain or sadness. Hope is the possibility of renewed joy...it's the memory of love given and received. Hope is here, within the magic and the memories of your heart.

Hope is us...you and me and the person next to you and across the room and down the street and in your dreams.

WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HOPE.

-- Darcie Sims Lovingly Lifted from TCF Front Range Chapter

Helpful Hint...



Hope For The Moment

There are times when it is hard to believe in the future, when we are temporarily just not brave enough. When this happens, concentrate on the present. Cultivate le petit bonheur (the little happiness) until courage returns. Look forward to the beauty of the next moment, the next hour, the promise of a good meal, sleep, a book, a movie, the likelihood that tonight the stars will shine and tomorrow the sun will shine. Sink roots into the present until the strength grows to think about tomorrow.

--Ardis Whitman, Reader's Digest

Book In Review...

We welcome book reviews. If you have read a book which you felt was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles, poems, pictures and remembrances to Lynn Vines at Lynntcf@aol.com and we can include them in the monthly newsletter. If you have grief related books and would like to donate them to our chapter's library, please let us know. 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.

Welcome...



In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance. You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone. In this place you can relax and breathe...the coats of others' expectations taken off. Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed. In this place all names can be spoken; in this place each one's story may be told.

We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; in this place ALL feelings, we enfold. Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed. Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road we see ahead. And those we love are pleased we are together, smile down on us, and bless this day. Glad for every tiny step we are taking as they send their light to guide us on our way. Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters - in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

~Genesse Bourdeau Gentry Written 30 July 2004

For those attending their first meeting of
The Compassionate Friends

Surviving

There's no way to know,
in those first, early years,
if the crying will stop,
be an ending to tears.
But slowly, so slowly,
through the grieving and time,

will come moments and days,
when hopefulness shines.
Backwards and forwards,
into darkness, then out,
we begin to start living;
scraps of new life peek out.
This happens most surely,
survivors will tell,
when we find time for others
and give of ourselves.
--Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From her book: "Stars in the Deepest Night"

Troubled Child

I was so scared to tell them about you.
I felt so ashamed...
you were a "troubled child,"
not "perfect" like all the rest.
Stories of children loved by everyone...
sons and daughters with
such promising futures.
Even though you were not like them,
you were my baby.
Even though you got into trouble and took
drugs, I was always by your side.
Even though you spent time in jail,
you could not have been loved more.
At times you were so frustrating
and seemed all bad,
Then you would do something wonderful,
and I knew you loved us.
I don't need to feel ashamed any more,
it didn't matter what you did
or who you were.
You were my child,
and you did not deserve to die.
I love you,
Mom
--Gretchen Wasson TCF, Bethany, OK

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



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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...

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Adam Michael Wechsler
Born: 3/03 Died: 11/23
Father: Zach Wechsler

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Birthday Tribute to: Edward W. Myricks II April 1972 - Oct. 2011



Dear Eddie,

Another birthday is here, but you are not. Just want you to know, we've not forgot. We think of you and miss you every day, not only on your angel anniversary or your birthday.

You will live on in our hearts forever. Happy Birthday Son Mom and Dad

**A Birthday Tribute to:
Joseph Licciardone
April 1994 – March 2016**



In loving memory of our dear Joseph. This year would have marked a milestone as you would have turned 30. Although you are no longer with us, your spirit continues to live in our hearts and memories. We would like to honor and celebrate your beautiful soul with 30 things that represent the joy and love you brought to our lives.

1. The day you entered this world.
2. Your laugh.
3. Your grease lightning dance.
4. Listening to your music.
5. Watching you play soccer.
6. Hearing your perspective about life.
7. Fun filled trips we got to spend together.
8. Family camping.
9. Watching you succeed in school.
10. Helping you learn how to drive.
11. Watching your Spanish cooking videos.
12. Seeing the joy on your face when you were with family.
13. Your smile.
14. Seeing you play with your nieces and nephews.
15. Your sense of humor.
16. Your patience when tutoring students.
17. Your cool dance moves.
18. Your intelligence.
19. Your hugs.
20. Watching you drum on every surface.
21. Watching you form a deep bond with your siblings.
22. How you were always highly admired by all who knew you.
23. Your love of earth and taking care of our planet.
24. Your very specific style that was uniquely you.
25. Your love for animals.
26. Your amazing soccer ball handling skills.
27. Your passion for the Italian culture and traditions.
28. Your adventurous nature.
29. The heavenly visits and signs we've received from you.
30. All of You.

Happy Heavenly 30th birthday Joseph. As each day passes, we miss you more and more. On this day that honors you, we pray that the heavens above are rejoicing in your name and reminding you

of how very special you are to us. We love and miss you deeply.

Nicole Morris (Joseph's Sister)

For Siblings...



The Decade Difference Helping Is Healing

In the beginning I didn't know how I was going to survive to the next day, my first thought when I awoke was, oh no my brother is dead! The physical heartache, tears, lethargy, fatigue, loss of concentration—my body even forced me to stop eating gluten and dairy. There was a deep heaviness within me and how I saw the rest of the world. Some days it felt like a depressive cloak over me that I couldn't remove.

As time moved forward, the 22nd, Chris' death day, protruded out in my mind and on every calendar I looked at. The anticipation of another month or year of my brother not being in my physical life. How could this be? Chris has been gone 3 months, 9 months, 4 years, and now 10 years and 9 months to the day.

The difference in a decade—I decided in order for me to move from survival into some form of thriving I had to be a more active participant in my own grief process. I went to local grief coalition meetings. Attended the monthly TCF chapter meetings. I started back in individual therapy. I became certified as a grief specialist and grief educator. I learned the language to help advocate for myself and other grievers too.

The difference in a decade—when I felt well enough to give back to the same organizations that had given me compassion, understanding, validation and allowed me to find my voice again in my early YEARS of grief. Actually, I was able to remove the depressive cloak through being an active participant in my own grief journey. I no longer feel the debilitating heartache because of the death of my brother. Of course, I get sad. Of course, I will miss him to my last breath. This is the difference in my first decade without Chris. It will be interesting to see what my second decade of grieving my brother looks like. I know one thing, he is always within me, encouraging me from beyond. --In honor of Christopher Daniel Bauer who died by suicide August 22nd, 2012 Written by his little sissy, Maggie Bauer. TCF Minneapolis, MN

A Part of Me

You were not just my brother, but you were my friend as well.

You were supposed to be here always
Or till the world came to an end.

I know that we argued and
Seemed to disagree,
But I could always count on you
To be there for me.

You may be gone from this world I see,
But you will always be a part of me.

--Donna Montville TCF, Gardner, MA



For Grandparents...

Letter from a Grandma's Heart

Dear Aaron,

I'm writing you to tell you Grandma loves you
And I'm missing you today.

I know that you can't read these words
But somehow that's okay,
Because the postman can't deliver what
I'm feeling anyway.

I'm sorry that we didn't have more time;
We barely got to say hello before we said goodbye.
But it was that day in May a miracle came true,
A Grandma's love was born that day and
The miracle was YOU.

Don't worry, I'll do the best I can
To help Mommy and Daddy through
The rough times they'll both have.
I know you see their sadness and
It hurts to see their pain.
But time will wash away their tears 'til only love
remains.

In closing, I just want to say I'll see your smile
In every child that passes through my day,
And when each day has ended
And twilight turns to night,
I'll look above and feel your love
For your star shines twice as bright.

--Roslyn Hurley in memory of Aaron Farrier
TCF Madison Area Chapter



From Our Members...

Dear Compassionate Friends,

'Butterflies are miraculous insects. They are

magical mysteries. They are so fragile, yet they are some of the world's greatest international travelers. They inspire hope and joy'. TCF's founder, Canon Simon Stephens, spoke movingly at the recent Gathering about the butterfly, the 'universal TCF symbol of hope'.

'Just as it inspired the Holocaust victims of man-made darkness' - even children who scratched butterflies on death-camp walls with pebbles and their finger-nails - 'so too it has a special place in our hearts. In the Solomon Islands I had the joy of daily dawn encounters with dinner-plate size butterflies taking nectar from Frangipane blossoms. They always brought me hope. For the butterfly is the supreme survivor'.

Many in TCF think of sons and daughters who have died as butterflies, released from the cocoon of death into some form of eternal or angelic life beyond. Canon Simon gave a different inspiring vision of butterflies. He talked of an airline pilot seeing millions of Red Admirals flying north over the Pyrenees, rising from winter sleep to summer in sweet feeding grounds in Britain and elsewhere.

We bereaved parents, he suggested, are like butterflies as we emerge 'from a place of great darkness and uncertainty. We seek hope for our many unanswered questions. We are on a long painful journey through the valley of the shadow...

At the heart of the Gathering is the dynamic presence of our child's love - a force that moves mountains.

Grief is the price we pay for love...Shedding tears, listening to each other's stories, we glimpse hope. The Red Admiral gives us hope in the difficult challenge that each one of us faces. For butterflies are buffeted over the Pyrenees by cold winds - they sometimes need the protection of outlying valleys in which to take shelter. Bereaved parents, despite their inner pain and despair, every day surmount the insurmountable, empowered by their child's love. That you are here is a tribute to your courage and determination not to let grief destroy your lives... There is great beauty and strength in the awakening butterfly.

'You need not walk alone. Traveling together, you too can spread your wings in the sun's warmth and can in turn give help to those behind who are still walking in the valley of the shadow. Grief, shared, empowers. Yes, hearts are broken and our lives are never the same. But in that sharing of grief, healing and hope have been found'.

With love, Margaret Brearley
Lifted with thanks from UK Compassion Friends

(Sometimes we need a break from grief. I think the following article can help restore some of the humor we are lacking right now.)

Great Truths About Life That Little Children Have Learned:

- * When your mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair.
 - * If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
 - * Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
 - * You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
 - * Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.
 - * Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
 - * Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a tic tac.
 - * Never hold a dust-buster and a cat at the same time.
 - * Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
 - * The best place to be when you are sad and missing your dead sister or brother is in Grandma's lap.
 - * Some things never get better, no matter what, you just learn to live with them broken.
- From the Internet, Submitted by Carol Olson

Thoughts on a previous TCF National Conference

Almost 3 years after losing my almost 18 year old son Brayden, I am still searching. I was skeptical about attending TCF National Conference but went anyway. I don't like crowds or big hotels but I was in one. I didn't want to see Bray's picture with the 1200+ pictures that loving parents wore in memory of their cherished children. Not wanting him to be left out, I wore it anyway.

It was surreal walking down the long hallway of the hotel in the morning to catch the elevator to attend classes to learn how to live again because Brayden had died. My legs felt similar to the first steps I took after Bray passed away; weightless, weak, like I was floating. But I kept walking and breathing and it got better.

I attended helping sessions put on mostly by parents who had lost children themselves and wanted to help me and others in dealing with this monster called grief. One session gave me researched and proven suggestions on how to heal. Another gave me hope that my child is alive in spirit. Another taught it is OK to be angry but it's what I do with the anger that matters. One session of a panel of siblings that had lost a brother or sister confirmed that I was doing the right things with my surviving son Daniel. Yeah!

One reminded us of how guilt can "zap our energy/strength" and "empty our tank" if we let it, and by sitting with and listening to others we can help them and ourselves.

I totally related to a father giving a session called "Love, Laughter, and Power Grieving" because both of our sons had loved to play football. He caught my attention immediately and everything he said resonated with me...feeling guilty because we are still here. "Every damn thing" his younger child does, his deceased son will miss.

We will never "get over it." He suggested taking some power back, that tears = love and are good. His tears were sorrowful but now flow from acts of love for his son/people remembering him. He said to find something that "will allow you to build and be creative." He works as a comedian and said his humor has saved him. I believe it!

My heart broke many times over as I cried for strangers as I looked into their eyes and listened to their stories. I met loving, supportive, and inspirational people.

A mother and her daughter walked me to a classroom, another asked me to join her table at lunch, another told me I was doing well. We are all searching for what we lost/loved, but can't have.

We will ALWAYS love our children and we have to find purpose again or we will literally die. Not truly living is dying too. The Compassionate Friends lets us know we are worthy and deserving of life/love and having a future; even if we never fully feel that way or believe it ourselves.

--Jeanne Thornbury, TCF Cincinnati North Chapter

The Compassionate Friends 47th National

Conference... Will be at the Marriott in New Orleans, LA from July 12th to 14th, 2024.

Conference registration



and hotel reservations are now available at The Compassionate Friends. The discounted room rate for the conference is \$144 plus taxes per night.

TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief, all while making friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Unique and cherished highlights of the TCF conference include a heartfelt Saturday evening Candle Lighting Program, Sharing Sessions, Keynote Addresses, Healing Haven, Butterfly Boutique, Crafty Corner, and Silent Auction. A weekend of inspiration, sharing, and learning is followed by the Walk to Remember on Sunday morning.

Conference Registration, room reservations, fees and additional information is available on the national TCF website

www.compassionatefriends.org

Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. The next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.



Flash Zoom Meetings... are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration. The intent is to check in on each other and

share, nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccia79@gmail.com for the link.

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

Newsletter Birthday Tributes... During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to Lynntcf@aol.com

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: April first for May 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 General 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
survivorsof suicide.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

Marilyn Nemeth

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Bill Matasso
 Nancy Lerner
 Connie & Leo Licciardone
 Sandra & Eddie Myricks
 Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Lynn Vines
 Kristy Mueller
 Kitty Edler
 Susan Kass

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

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

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





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

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

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

In loving memory of Benjamin Moutes, March 2007 - May 2010. You are forever loved and forever missed.

Love, Mamma, Pappa, Jacob, and Sofia

In loving memory of Jillian Nicole Katnic, March 1987 - October 2018. Happy 37th Birthday in Heaven. We miss you more than ever.

Love, Mom

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

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

In loving memory of _____

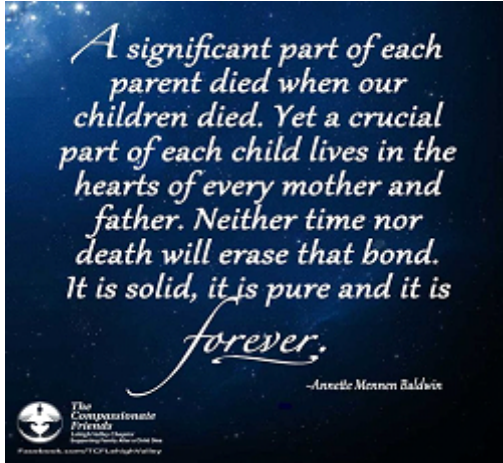
Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

Tribute _____

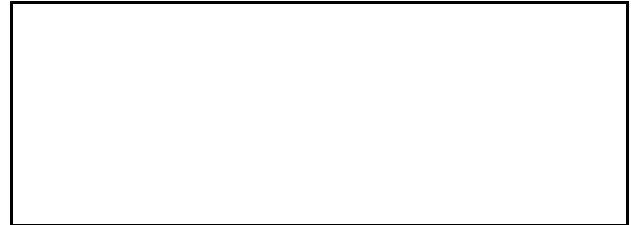
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
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April 2024

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

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

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

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

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

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

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

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

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

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

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