



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

June 2024 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING
will be June 6th, the first Thursday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.
(See changes to room under location)

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. → Park In EAST lot. Follow path to back patio. Meetings are held at the west end of the church. **New meeting room is 101 classroom. Follow signs. Last door, first floor.)

--Please remember to park in the EAST 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, June 6th meeting will start with **"Facing June: The month with many Traditions."**

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)

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The **Thursday, June 6th** meeting will start with **“Facing June: The month with many Traditions.”** Father’s Day, Graduations, School Holidays, Weddings, Vacations... June becomes a very busy month for many bereaved families. It also becomes a month to work on our grief while acclimating to the loss of a child or sibling. With a family member missing we look at these activities as something to get through rather than enjoy like we use to. Many fear putting a damper on things because of their grief. Some become overwhelmed at having to make plans. Many times just the thought of doing what used to bring enjoy, now becomes faced with dread...But it doesn’t have to. We invite you to come share how others have handled these events when newly bereaved and faced with decisions compared to how they look at them now.

Summer



Summer in Michigan can warm the heart and heat the body. There are soft silky nights spent viewing dots of light in the heavens. Beaches, barbecues, baseball, family reunions, fireworks, carnivals and cool drinks make the summer a special time of the year for a Midwesterner eager to shed winter’s coat. School’s out while vacations blend together for happy times. Even blue skies push the gray away in the peninsula state begging us to view, if not experience, the outdoors.

Someone is not there in their normal place and the season of the year will never change that fact. Determination to make “things” better is a laudable, though often quite challenging goal. Having a good time between spring and fall may be a difficult task when a good day may be a notable achievement. The simple act of attempting to have fun may be a simple, innocent act of honoring our child’s memory. Every month seems to bring specific special thoughts and those fun times may bring along some unwanted baggage of sad moments that will never go away, but they will become more manageable, more easily carried.

It seems that if we keep busy sometimes “things” get better even if it’s only for a little while. An idle mind is the devil’s workshop is another one of those phrases that seem to finally have some meaning for the bereaved. Find something, anything, to occupy the mind and the heart will most likely follow, if only briefly. If there is no time

to think then there is no time for heartache, and this fragile formula may work on occasion to soothe the soul, providing rare relief from the staggering, stunning, seemingly endless pain.

Other times it is just too overwhelming, too exhausting to keep one step ahead of the darkness that reality has inflicted. We are transported back to when “things” were different, normal, better, so briefly we let go of hope and that is ok, it happens. The fight for survival is not easy but it is possible. The struggle may be measured by where we have been, how far we have come, as well as where we are. Congratulate yourself for making it this far. We may share many similarities, but no one knows your hard road better than you.

I think that our son Brian is having the best summer of all. That is what I choose to think, choose to know, choose to feel. So when I close my eyes tonight I will remember fireworks and sparklers of the past, the amusement parks yet to be visited.

--San Diego Chapter, CA

Things That Catch Us Off Guard

For those who have experienced the loss of a child we know that grief can often catch us off guard, like a wave that seems to come out of nowhere and overwhelms us. Henry James, American author, psychologist, and philosopher, once wrote, "Sorrow comes in great waves... but it rolls over us, and though it may almost smother us, it leaves us. And we know that if it is strong, we are stronger, inasmuch as it passes, and we remain."

I had a new appreciation of that fact when on vacation in Hawaii in April. My wife and I watched the waves roll onto the beach. Some high school boys were playing in the surf using boogie boards. We decided to experience the waves for ourselves. We ventured out and suddenly a wave was rolling over us that peaked about five feet over our heads. It knocked me off my feet. It knocked my wife into an uncontrollable spin until she washed up on shore.

When you are in the midst of a wave of grief it can feel overwhelming and uncontrollable. You can feel as if you are drowning. But when the wave passes, you realize that you have remained. You are stronger than the grief. You will survive. Another thing that can catch us off guard is special occasions. May and June seem to be full of them: the graduation of a class our child would have been

in; the first, or maybe tenth, Mother's Day or Father's Day without our child, church events like confirmation. They can all catch us off guard. As with those waves I mentioned earlier, it might be best to face them head on and dive right into them. Then we are in control.

One more thing I was surprised to be caught off guard by (saying that sounds redundant) was humor and laughter. When you are experiencing the very fresh and sharp pain of grief, laughter seems so out of place. But as time went by I remember appreciating laughter, just as I began to appreciate again the smell of flowers or the chirping of birds. When that point happens will be different for each grieving parent. But it is a sign of hope, just as the new buds of spring are a sign of hope. Our monthly support group offers hope. Hope that the sharp pain of grief will go away. Hope that I can begin to remember my child's life more than their death. Hope that I will survive. Hope that I will laugh again. Come and share in that hope. We need not walk alone.

--Dave Wilkinson ~ TCF Chapter Leader, Green Bay, WI

"Butterfly in the Snow"

I knew that the further away we got from Minnesota I should have felt the weight of the world lift off of my shoulders. Normally someone who was going on an 18-day vacation, away from the stresses and strains of work and everyday life, on their way to the beautiful West Coast should feel that way. But the events of the past few years made it difficult to relax and I felt the muscles in my neck and back become tensor as we journeyed on.

I could sense that my son Dan picked up on my anxieties, as I was sure he had his own. He was seated next to me and I tried to flash a smile of reassurance to him that really belied my fears and the growing knot that I felt in the pit of my stomach.

Our uneasiness was justified. This was the first time we were on vacation in a little over four years. That family vacation had ended in unspeakable tragedy. Having spent the day of my 45th birthday at Daytona Beach, my husband, daughter Nina, son Dan and myself were on our way to my celebratory birthday supper.

Only three-quarters of a mile from our destination, a drunk driver fell asleep at the wheel,

crossed the median, hit the side of the car where my precious and beloved 15 ½ year old daughter, Nina, was singing and she was killed instantly.

From that moment, life as we knew it was irrevocably changed. It was the initiation into unfamiliar territory and the beginning of the roller coaster ride of emotions we were to experience.

We were about to be educated in the school of grief; a place we never wanted to enter. From that day forward I swore that I would never, ever attempt to go on another family vacation. The memory of that one was painfully and eternally burned into my mind. I was fearful that if it could happen once, it could happen again. In my experiences along the grief pathway and those I had become acquainted with while on that journey, I came to learn that no one was immune to tragedy repeating itself.

Shortly after Nina died, I became involved in "The Club" that no one wants to be a member of. I became a part of The Compassionate Friends, a self- help support group for bereaved parents. Membership is a parent's worst nightmare to someone who has never lost a child, but to those of us who have, it is a lifesaver. With their support and friendship, I could uncurl myself from the fetal position and begin to think, feel and cope with life again. There I met people that I know will be my lifelong friends; people who had somehow even survived the loss of more than one child, and some that had lost their only child. Each of their stories were incredibly heartbreaking: children "gone too soon" from cancer, congenital defects, accidents, house fires, suicide, AIDS, homicide – a never- ending list of sorrow.

But somehow they carried on and gave back what they had received tenfold to the newly bereaved. They were such an inspiration and I knew that in time I would want to give back as well. A few years after my precious daughter's death, I became co-leader and newsletter editor to our TCF Chapter in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Compassionate Friend's National Conference was being held in Portland, Oregon in June of 1999. I had always heard how lovely Oregon was and for the first time considered even attempting another family vacation. Though I was apprehensive, I wondered how I could allow my feelings to dictate that my son Dan would never experience with his family the beauty that this bountiful country of ours has to offer. I also justified it by rationalizing that it was more a "business trip",



to receive ideas to help my other Compassionate Friends, than a pleasure trip.

My parents generously offered to take Dan and me through some of the most gorgeous country in America. We traveled to Glacier, Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons National Parks, with their “purple mountains majesty.” We saw the rugged and rocky, lighthouse studded spectacular Oregon coastline and the breathtakingly gargantuan redwood trees in Jedidiah Smith Redwood Forest in California. Though I was awestruck and taken in by all the beauty, inwardly I still harbored doubts. In my prayers at night I would speak to Nina and ask for her approval. “Is this all right with you, Nina, after what happened on our last family vacation? Please somehow let me know that I am doing the right thing.”

The day before we were to arrive in Portland, we made a stop at another National Park. I don’t think I was at all prepared for my surroundings at Crater Lake National Park. To say the crystalline sapphire-blue waters of the lake skirted by rolling mountains, volcanic peaks, and evergreen forests left me breathless would have been a gross understatement.

As we were not properly dressed for the cold weather and snow, my parents, Dan and I shivered as we stood above the snow line overlooking this awe-inspiring sight. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a tiny unique butterfly appeared. With the snowy backdrop, it looked out of place. It fluttered near us and circled the four of us several times, but stayed close by. I watched its flight until it disappeared as quickly as it arrived.

I felt a smile cross my lips. A warm glow overtook my entire being and the tenseness in my body diminished. I had already drawn my own conclusion as to whom this unlikely visitor was, but did not share my thoughts with anyone else.

The four of us stood quietly for a few minutes until my father broke the silence. “You know who that was, don’t you?” he quietly remarked. I stated that I knew who I thought it was. “Butterflies can’t fly up here in the cold air at this elevation,” he concluded. “That little butterfly was Nina. She came to remind us that she is with us always and wherever we are... and that this is the kind of exquisite beauty and so much more that she experiences in heaven every day.”

The highlight of my trip – a sign from my precious daughter, who came with the answer to my question. And to remind us all that the best is

yet to come.

--Cathy L. Seehuetter TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina



Planning a Wedding for a Surviving Sibling

Of all of the events we look forward to enjoying with our children, I think weddings have always been pretty high on my list. So many images come to mind: colorful dresses on smiling bridesmaids; pretty bouquets of freshly scented flowers, a radiant bride walking arm in arm down the aisle with her proud dad; a nervous groom in awe of his beautiful bride. New beginnings; sacred moments to be cherished forever; friends and family gathered to witness and celebrate the union of two lives.

Four years ago we were preparing for the marriage of our younger daughter, Debbie. She was engaged in the fall and was planning for a wedding the following spring. A wedding to plan, so much to do, so much to look forward to – however, for our family this was the beginning of yet another bittersweet time.

Debbie’s only sibling, Anna, had died suddenly from brain cancer six years previous. Those were very traumatic, life-changing years for our family and close friends. Every area of our life was touched by the bitter pain that loss brings, as we slowly adjusted to the reality that Anna’s earthly presence was no longer with us. There were constant reminders that all the hopes and dreams we had for her had died, as well. Oh, how she loved weddings. She recorded every wedding ceremony broadcast on television. As parents, we grieved that fact that she would never marry. We would never share in the joy of planning and celebrating her wedding day.

In those early years of grief, I felt as if I would never find joy again. I certainly felt that I would never have the energy to help in planning a wedding for her younger sister. The thought of witnessing and celebrating Debbie’s marriage only brought pain and tears. My heavy heart was sorrowful and ached over the losses Anna’s death brought to her sister. Now the time had come. Debbie was engaged, and we had work to do!

Much to my surprise, the next several weeks and months of planning were the most joyous times

I had experienced since Anna's death. As mom and daughter, Debbie and I made many memories together – and Anna was always with us. She was always part of the process.

We would frequently find ourselves remarking, —If Anna were here she would take care of this, or —Anna would not like wearing that dress. It was as though she was guiding our every step.

Including the deceased child in the wedding can be a difficult topic. Most of the moms I have talked with regarding the marriage of a surviving child, express the need to somehow have the deceased sibling remembered in some way. Sometimes the surviving child is afraid to discuss this with the parent, for fear of stirring up emotions.

The bride or groom-to-be need not fear addressing the subject. Most parents have these thoughts right below the surface, and there usually is much relief when the issues are openly discussed. It could also be the other way around.

The parent might be afraid to bring up the subject with the surviving child. Communication is important, so that everyone's feelings can be expressed. Working through these feelings before the wedding will help the actual day to be more of a time of happiness and celebration, rather than sadness and pain.

As Anna's mom, I was relieved, excited and grateful that Debbie wanted to remember her sister on this important day. I can honestly tell you that this did not detract in the least from the happiness and excitement of the wedding day. This was Debbie's day, and my day to be —mother-of-the-bride. There was sadness that Anna was not physically present, but she was there making sure that this was a day filled with joy, love and hope. It was so much fun from beginning to end.

If you are a bereaved parent with a surviving child who is planning a wedding and want to remember someone who has gone too soon, I would like to share some of the ideas that others have used to incorporate the memory of their loved one into the day.

When one of Anna's college friends married, she had a floral arrangement around the unity candle that included things that reminded her of deceased loved ones. These persons were listed in the program. She had a purple crayon for Anna. (Anna taught preschool – purple was always a favorite!)

Another of Anna's college friends had a votive holder with five candles that she and the groom lit in memory of loved ones, including Anna. Anna's college roommate had a single candle of remembrance for all her loved ones who had died, and released butterflies following the service.

Our Debbie did not have a maid of honor, only bridesmaids. She asked her only surviving grandfather to step in for her sister to sign the marriage license as a witness. Debbie had a maid-of-honor bouquet made up for Anna, to be placed on her grave.

Debbie's sister and the couple's deceased grandparents were listed in the program under a picture of a butterfly, with the words, —Forever in our hearts. Pictures of these persons were also included on a bulletin board during the reception.

Debbie —borrowed the necklace and earrings that her sister wore to her junior prom. She carried an —old hankie that belonged to her grandma, and a piece of her other grandma's wedding dress was sewn onto her tiara.

One couple had a bouquet of white roses, each representing a loved one who had died. Another couple had individual pillar candles on a table with flower rings around them. These were lit before the service began.

At another wedding reception, the bride and groom made a toast to all those loved ones who had died, stating their names, and expressing gratitude for the ways they had touched their lives.

Most importantly, talk about this subject well ahead of time. As a parent, make your needs known. However, respect the desires of the bride and groom. This is their day and their choice. Even if the deceased sibling is not remembered in a tangible way, be assured that she/he continues to live on in the hearts and minds of all who knew and loved her/him.

I add a couple of suggestions for the bereaved. When you are a bereaved parent, grandparent or sibling, weddings can be like a time bomb. Know that this day has the potential for many emotions to surface. It is ok to have a few tears of sadness, as well as joy – carry tissues! It is also ok to enjoy yourself and have fun – wear comfortable shoes. It is also alright not to join in absolutely everything – know your limits. When your friends ask how they can help, delegate! Save your energy for what is



really important. While keeping your deceased child close in your heart, enjoy this time with your surviving child and make some new memories together.

If you feel the need for extra support during your grief journey, attend a meeting of The Compassionate Friends where you will find that you need not walk alone.

Wishing you many warm memories,
--Paula Funk, Anna's Mom
TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, Petoskey, MI

Grief – The Human Experience

I was thrust into the world of senseless violence, grief and anguish with the sudden news of the murder of my oldest child and only daughter. It began with utter shock and disbelief and a slim hope that a mistake had been made. The shock and disbelief still catch me at times, even though four years have passed. And of course a terrible mistake was made; some cruel and misguided man ended the life of a young woman, who loved life, people, and animals. She picked up stray puppies, loved children, had a radiant sunny smile and wanted to start a camp for mentally retarded and disabled children. A part of me was killed with her and I will never be the same again.

We all ask “why”? We become acutely aware of our vulnerability. The world suddenly becomes an unfair and dangerous place. Our sense of trust, order, and the belief that if we live a just and good life nothing bad will happen to us, are shattered. However, it is important to remember that we are all individuals, that our circumstances differ, as does the length and pattern of our grief. What we can offer those who are grieving is a caring acceptance of their special way of dealing with their anguish and a willingness to listen.

“Give Sorrow Words”; is the message of the self-support group Parents of Murdered Children. Healing can be facilitated by telling one's story again and again and by allowing oneself to experience pain, rage, and despair. Most of us do not realize our own strengths and ability to cope.

The resilience and power of the human spirit are awesome. When I come into contact with families whose child has been murdered, and experience the compassion and caring within the group, my faith in the human spirit is restored. Survivors of the murder of a child, spouse, or friend have a great deal to offer one another and often

can be of more help than the clergy or mental health professionals.

I would say that probably the most important element that can help us in our grieving is that we treat ourselves with great kindness and that we do not set up unfair expectations of ourselves. Length of time, intensity of sorrow, may be different for each of us. We need to give ourselves permission to experience our anguish in our own time, without deadlines or hurtful judgments.

As we live through unimaginable heartbreak and sadness, it is a time for gentleness; it is a time to forgive ourselves, our anger and self-centeredness; it is a time to allow ourselves to weep, as long and as often as we wish.

It is important not to allow society in general, our friends, mental health professionals, or the clergy in particular, to pressure us into getting on with the business of living, in other words, to shorten or suppress our grieving. Well-meaning people who expect the bereaved to become functional quickly and be smiling and cheerful again, may do incredible harm. Hurrying our grief will certainly increase the feelings of loneliness, hurt and alienation we are already feeling.

It is important to grieve, to experience the pain, to weep, and to acknowledge the shock, horror, and weight of our loss. To allow ourselves to grieve is healing in the long run. It enables us to put our lives together again as best we can at our own pace and under very difficult circumstances.

-- Wanda Bincer Mother of Yvonne
Parents of Murdered Children Chapter Madison,
Wisconsin pmoc.com



Father's Day

Most dads look forward to Father's Day. A rare sleep in. A steaming hot coffee delivered bedside. A gift cut and pasted by little hands or, as time goes on, a chance to get the whole family back together for a meal. For fathers left bereaved by the death of a child, however, Father's Day represents a considerably more complicated emotional landscape.

Those who also have living children often report being caught between the joy of the current moment and the immense sadness about what might have been. Those whose only child has died might wonder if they can call themselves a father at all.

In 2010 Western Australian writer and artist

Carly Marie Dudley initiated International Bereaved Father's Day to honor fathers who've experienced the death of a child through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death. There are more of those dads than you'd think. Statistics tell us that 2500 babies are stillborn in Australia every year. A further 700 die within the first few hours, days or weeks of life. It's estimated that another 103,000 babies each year are lost through miscarriage.

Behind those statistics are the stories – the love stories, of dads missing daughters and dads missing sons. "Fathers' Day and other family - centered occasions like it is often a time of renewed sadness for fathers whose babies have died," says Sands General Manager Services, Janelle Marshall.

"Because a father's loss is sometimes less tangible than a mother's, a father's needs and feelings can be, however unintentionally, overlooked in the aftermath of such a traumatic loss." "It's so important to recognize that dads grieve too and that they also need the time and space to do so in the weeks, months and often even years later." Of the bereaved dads who contacted Sands for support, Janelle said many report that it is immensely helpful to be able to talk to other fathers who've had similar experiences.

"Sands volunteers provide a number of support services for bereaved parents, including our dedicated Men's Support Line, which connects grieving dads with others fathers who've experienced pregnancy or infant loss," she said. "We want bereaved fathers to know they don't need to grieve in silence on Fathers' Day – or on any other day of the year."

Source: Sands TCF Western Australia
tcfvictoria, queensland Australia

The Color of My Joy When Hope Comes Home

It was not planned, yellow meaning so much to us. First, a yellow scarf, given to me by one of Tom's high school teachers, a thoughtful gift to wrap me up through my grief. Then the question asked, "What was Tom's favorite color?" When he was young, it was yellow (or "lellow," as he said before speech therapy). Finally, the realization during that first week of loss, yellow is the color for suicide prevention. So yellow became forever tied to the memory of my beautiful son who left this world too soon.



Now everywhere I see yellow, whether natural or human-made, magnificent or mundane, I am reminded of him. Flowers in the yard, cemetery, or The fire hydrant in our yard. The bracelet I wear in his memory. The Pikachu alarm clock and giant stuffed Pikachu, both in our "Tooffice" (Tom's room + now our office). The owl kitchen timer. The ribbon pinned to his favorite stuffed animal, Bubby. The teardrop gem necklace I am wearing right now. The stuffed duck dropped off a few days ago along with a heartfelt card. The cookies a student gave me last week. The crocheted afghan, a gift from a student, placed lovingly on a chair in our family room where Tom spent most of his time. The Dollar Tree crown resting on the head of his Mariners stuffed teddy bear. The heart painted on a sign made for us. The yellow ribbon bow, quietly placed on the bannister leading up into my high school classroom. The blown glass heart, a gift after his passing, showcased in our shadow box of Tom's special items.

Just yesterday I realized anew I will never see him or hold him, hear his laugh, or roll my eyes at his bad puns again, at least in this life. But he lives on in me and around me in so many ways. So although blue is the color of my grief, yellow is the color of my joy, because when I see it, I am reminded of him and that others remember and miss him, too. Despite the fact he is no longer here with me, he is everywhere, every day.

--Kimberly Starr In Memory of my son Tom. TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide Group

Thoughts, Late at Night... Silent tears...

We go through life with a broken heart, though most days you will see us smile. We get through those days knowing it is just one more, closer to seeing them again. We still laugh, we still play with other children, ours or our friends'. We still live, yet the spark in our eyes is gone, the joy inside has left.

Some days, we venture out, some days we just don't. And sometimes when we do, reality hits hard so we turn around and run back to safety. We can be strong but mostly because we have no choice. If asked how we are, we will usually say OK just so we can escape. Escape more questions or unwanted advice about how it is time to move on.

We are afraid and we panic at the thought of forgetting a little more each day, their voice, their

smell, the way they kissed us, the way they felt in our arms, how it sounded when they said our name and even their favorite food.

You might see us walking through graves at all hours or the day and night. You might hear us talk to a picture on the wall, or a box sitting on a shelf, Remember to never question why we do this, it is not an easy thing. To go sit on our baby's grave to share our day with them, or lie in their bed, reading their favorite book, knowing they will never be there again to turn the next page before we are done saying the last word.

See, we don't really want to go on without them, we just don't. They are our hearts, our souls. They make the sunshine and the rain fall. They send us snow kisses and flower petals in the wind. They paint rainbows and sunsets. They bring us butterflies and lady bugs. They always have, just now, they do it from Heaven.

Heaven is where our children had to go so they could be free. But we are left behind. And now we go through life with our broken hearts, though most days you will see us smile. But remember, next time when you see us smile as you go by your day, remember that at night, as you go to bed and close your eyes, silent tears roll down our cheeks as we cry ourselves to sleep one more time.

--Mimi Avery, Julian's mom (Forever 2), TCF Fort Worth, TX

Newly Bereaved...

I send this message to my child
Who no longer walks this plane,
A message filled with love
Yet also filled with pain.
My heart continues to skip a beat
When I ponder your early death
As I think of times we'll never share
I must stop to catch my breath.
Tread gently near the tender souls who've lost a child,
Whose hearts are bruised and bleeding;
For healing comes slowly
With pain in every forward step,
tears in every backward look.
So much love still flows for that special one—
Arms reach out to hold and back to cling,
But reach forward only numbly,
Fearful of forgetting or being disloyal by going on.
There is guilt in laughing, feeling pleasure, even
being alive.

There are questions, longings, heartaches.
But slowly, surely, strength and healing come, in
God's own time-

Not as answer, nor as forgetting,
But as acceptance that this pain,
This loss, is ours to live with and somehow,
By God's grace to use to bless.

--Jean Spleftstoesser, TCF, Pike's Peak, CO

Seasoned Greivers....

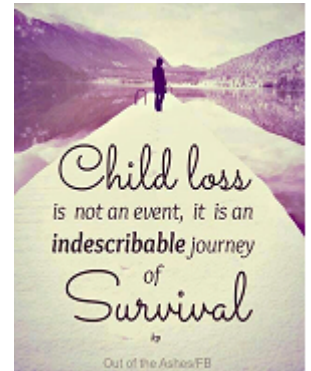
Surviving

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"



Looking Forward...

Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say: "There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back—but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for the "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in

front of people—who became a facilitator. Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry. Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know— next month.
--John DeBoer TCF Greater Omaha, NE

Friends And Family...

Editor's Note: Remember, sometimes we are hurting so bad that no matter what anyone says, it won't be enough. And other times what someone says needs to be heard differently. Maybe if we practice empathy more ourselves, we will recognize the value it can be for others.—LV

A Survivor's Alphabet: Empathy

"Where were you when I needed you?" Ever find yourself saying words like that? Ever look for comfort at a point of greatest need and wonder why it doesn't come or help? Family and friends try their best to let us know they care. It never seems enough for just what we need at the critical moment.

What's going on? Family and friends, in expressing their sincere words of comfort and love, are relieving their own anxiety. In their attempts they often bypass our more critical need. It's like two trains passing each other in the night. They meet but quickly go their separate ways.

What we have received is sympathy which, by itself, gives temporary comfort and relief but has little long lasting effect. It may or may not touch the point of hurting with enough impact to relieve. What is better is a sensitivity to hurt where it is and a response to that hurt that mirrors the crisis itself. What is needed is not sympathy but empathy.

Empathy is made up of the following:
Listening. What do you hear when you hear? Isn't it amazing how often we hear but we do not listen. You and I hear the concert while the violinist listens for pitch and tone. We tell a mechanic the engine runs "rough" while he listens and notes that something is wrong with the valves. Developing the skill of listening enables us to be more sensitive to actual need where it occurs. A cry for help may be more, or less, than what we think we hear. Someone is hurting and needs relief, now. Being with that person we listen and are given clues of what to say and do that will bring the greatest relief. It's not for us to set the agenda; the other person in their hurt and pain does.

Understanding. By careful listening it's amazing what we can learn that we only surmised before.

We learn that our agenda can be put "on hold" while the hurting person is considered as top priority. We learn that words do not always have the weight we give to them; a touch will do far more. Maybe just being there without thinking that we have to do something helps. Whatever it is, we are there for the other person and they know it; they are given just what they need at that given moment.

Value. This tacit understanding gives strength for building trust. A bond is created whose value will be noted long after the crisis is over. Friendships are developed that are long lasting. New understanding between family members creates a climate of love. Personal self esteem is given a boost which has a value of its own. We understand others and they understand us and a network is established of support and caring.

Empathy is "LUV" actively supporting and sustaining to develop strength for times of crisis. It goes beyond in creating long lasting relationships that give personal vitality to each of us.
--Jesse Baker Port Orange, FL.

Helpful Hint...



The Survivors

The depth of your sorrow diminishes slowly and, at times, imperceptibly. Your recovery is not an act of disloyalty to the one who has died. Nor is it achieved by forgetting the past. Try to strike a delicate balance between a yesterday that should be Remembered and a tomorrow that must be Created.
--TCF, Atlanta, Georgia

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 The Compassionate Friends 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. We have this book in our chapter's lending library. --Pat Brown TCF Minneapolis Chapter, (It is also in our chapter's library--Lynn)

Star-light, Star-bright - Oh, how I wish tonight...



Oh, the joy, the bliss of our children so loved,
Now they sparkle in heaven with the stars above
Their legend lives on with charm and with grace,
As they shine down on us from their heavenly place.
Some nights are so dark when our hearts fill with pain,
Then we think that we can never be a happy again.
For how can we live on with this pain that we feel?
Since our children died, life now seems so unreal.
We hear all the sounds on earth below -
But our senses are numb because we still miss them so.
Our hearts are so heavy - our minds cry out, Why?
The children we love and miss - now reside in the sky.
The stars, like our children, shine down with promises of love,
Their glory sometimes hidden by the clouds above.
But, we know they are still there even though we can't see.
Because their brightness shines on inside you and me.
Now, the stars beckon to us as they twinkle above,
Our children singing messages of hope and of love.
They are cradled high above us twinkling so bright,
Shining down beams of hope with the STAR-LIT NIGHT.

--Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS
In honor of All Beavered Parents

Seasons of the Heart

Your special days are unchanging
Seasons of the heart I celebrate.
Your birth, forever spring,
Tender memories relate,
New and green, a dream
From which too soon I awake.

The summer of your life was bright
Laughter needed no reason,
Seemingly endless days of sharing.
Sixteen summers. Short in season.
Your death brought winter without warning,
What sense in all this can be found?
Summer dreams replaced with mourning.
Where is hope now?

But the heart knows what
The mind cannot accept
That when all is lost,
It is love that is left.
Love knows no barriers
Time or distance recognize.
Love does not diminish,
But is constant in our lives.
And like a summer breeze
Uplifts and inspires us
With healing memories.

--Peggy Walls TCF Alexander City, AL
In Memory of my son, Eddie

Our Butterflies

We are weary caterpillars
Awash on life's tide.
Little do we realize
There's a butterfly inside.
Our feet solidly on the ground
The earth, it holds our eye.
It's hard to imagine
That one day we will fly.
While we mourn our children's loss
They fly freely up above.
Floating free and peacefully
On breezes of God's love.
Their wings and iridescent glow.
Their bodies are pure light.
And somewhere choirs of angels sang
The moment they took flight.
They live in joy and happiness
And peace we cannot know
We can only bide our time
And await our time to go.
But one day we will join them
And together we will fly.
Then we will have forgotten
We ever said good-bye.
--Marilyn Futrell

In memory of my son John Robert (J.R.) Woodfin
TCF, The Heart of Florida



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brian Daniel Edelman
Born: 5/86 Died: 8/23
Father: Ray Edelman

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nicolas Frank DiMarco
Born: 9/89 Died: 9/22
Father: Frank DiMarco

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Lauthere
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96
Parents: Larry & Chris
Lauthere

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
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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mark T. Vasquez
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/11
Parents: Manuel & Blanca
Vasquez Jr.

Adam Michael Wechsler
Born: 3/2003 Died: 11/23
Father: Zach Wechsler

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Birthday Tributes...

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

Sorry, no tributes were
submitted this month.

For Siblings...



Why It Felt Selfish to Grieve After Losing My Brother...so I kept the pain to myself

I remember the day in vivid detail, and although he's been dead longer than he lived, I am quickly drawn to tears at the mere writing of this sentence. We all expect to lose our parents at some point. And losing a child is an almost daily thought and fear of all parents. But the loss of a brother in his youth comes wholly unexpected and changes the landscape of your world so quickly that it can be hard to grasp.

I was 19 on the day I learned of my brother's death to a drug overdose. He was 22 or 23. I can't be sure because I have a mental block about the date. My parents call me every year to remind me and within weeks I find it impossible to put a date to it.

My father didn't say anything as he walked past, but his face was ashen and tense as if holding back something explosive and painful. Without a word I followed him into the master bedroom where my mother was reading a book. He blurted out as though he hadn't the strength to hold it in any longer, "Philip is dead." His face left no doubt of the sincerity of his statement. And the wail that came from my mother racked me to my core. It was like the cumulative pain of every mother who ever lost a child and it haunts me to this day, some 26 years later. My father wrapped his arms around my mother and they grieved deeply.

I stood there. A cold wind blew through me and seemed to strip me of all emotion. A numbness enveloped me. In a way, I understood my parents' grief much better than I did my own. Theirs was so overwhelming, and I knew instinctively that there could be no greater loss than that of a child. My grief seemed almost selfish by comparison. So I held it mostly to myself.

I found my tears a day after the news, and then it seemed like crying would be my permanent state. I cried with my parents, but mostly I cried alone. When you're 19, few of your friends have suffered such a loss. They don't know how to react. They don't know what to say. People came by to comfort my parents. They brought books on losing a child. I walked around in a fog, touching things. Walls, fabrics, rocks, trees. Assuring myself the world was still there. Solid. Real. It was a strange time and it changed me forever.

My brother was a Dead Head, following the Grateful Dead around. Addicted to the bohemian and drug-fueled life style. He was popular and fun. The girls thought he was sweet, and the boys found him cool and easygoing. He loved music and cars and could disassemble or build anything. He was my big brother,

so he was also a pain the way older siblings can be. And while I took my share of abuse from him, he also protected me.

Protected me from his own influence. From the lifestyle choices he was making. Told me drugs were not for me. For all Phil's many years of drug abuse, he never once asked me or allowed me to get high with him. That's how I best know his love.

I don't have much of my brother. A tie-dye peace symbol banner he made and hung on his wall. And a notebook where he jotted down things he needed to remember. People's phone numbers, money he borrowed and owed, or lent and was due, doodles. I like the notebook and can see him in action in my head rather than in still life like the photographs that seem to crowd out real memories.

My teenage daughters have known of Phil their whole lives. And sadly, I think I have presented him more as a cautionary tale than a real person. Maybe it's time to visit the grave I have never been to. Maybe it's time to share the fun stories and adventures and laughter of the brothers we were. Yes. Maybe it's time they met their Uncle Phil.

--By Kevin Kantz

Sean

This is a poem I wrote for my brother.

I love you, Sean!

I stood in the bathroom, what should I do?

Mom had just told me someone had found you.

She had no idea what she should say now,

But I cried from my heart

Please tell me how?

We raced down the freeway to where you lie,

As my mind asked

How can someone just die?

I collapsed to the ground dizzy with pain,

Breathing from habit like a fall's first rain.

Back to the church we unwillingly went,

Gathered together we started to vent.

Reminiscing on times we've laughed and cried,

Trying to be closer to you inside.

The time had stopped ticking in life for me.

A day without you would be misery.

The funeral came and is like a dream,

I spoke on stage but wanted to scream.

Now it's been months and gets worse with each day,

Missing you desperately here's what I'll say,

I promise you I'll never say good-bye.

Just please let me know you hear when I cry!

I have a hope that I'll see you again

When I finally set foot on the streets of heaven.

--Written by Dana Lyn Brophy

In memory of Sean Patrick Sullivan

For Grandparents...



Papa, Remember Yesterday?

That's what he'd say to me
when a happy memory came to his mind.
Yesterday was anytime in the past...
A day, a week or a month behind.
It didn't matter to him; it was all yesterday.
Last night, last Easter, when Santa came.
A sweet rush of happy memories from better days.
For him they were all the same.
His concept of time was different than ours,
He wasn't here that long.
Just three years of changing seasons...
I know why his memories were strong.
Now it's my turn to remember the past,
To cherish the days gone by.
Like him—I will smile about yesterday.
For his sake and mine, I will try...
Papa, remember yesterday.
--Jim Beerman, TCF, Cincinnati, OH

From Our Members...



A Terrible Blow ...

The loss of a loved one is often referred to as a "blow." That is exactly what it is, an emotional blow that affects the spirit the same way that a crushing blow on the head affects the body. For a while you are going to be dazed. None of your reactions will be as in normal life. In a way, this numbness is a merciful thing, because it deadens the psychic pain while it lasts, but no one who has lost a loved one should expect to feel the same as always, or apologize for behavior that is temporarily erratic or different.

--Norman Vincent Peale

Submitted by Linda Curtis

We welcome and encourage you to submit contributions you found meaningful to you in your grief. We prefer your original poems and thoughts, but we can also print other material if proper credit is given to the author. Please take the time to submit a poem or article you found helpful.

The Compassionate Friends 47th National Conference...

Will take place July 12th to 14th,
2024 in New Orleans, LA For
more information contact

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: June first for July 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.



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.Livealone.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
survivorsofselfharm.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.

Save The Date: July 12, 2024 - July 14, 2024 The 47th TCF National Conference will take place in New Orleans, LA from July 12th to 14th, 2024 More info to come.

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

A Father's Grief



It must be very difficult
To be a man in grief,
Since "men don't cry" and "men are strong"
No tears can bring relief.
It must be very difficult
To stand up to the test,
And field calls and visitors
So that she can get some rest.
They always ask if she's alright
And what she's going through,
But seldom take his hand and ask,
"My friend, how are you?"
He hears her cry in the night
And thinks his heart will break,
And dries her tears and comforts her
But "stays strong" for her sake.
It must be very difficult
To start each day anew,
And try to be so very brave-

He lost his child too.
- Eileen Knight Hagmeister



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies



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 Mathew Hales Clifford, 1/80 - 3/15. Please continue mailing the newsletter to me. I read it cover to cover and always find articles that speak to me. This helps in my growth and acceptance of this tragic reality. TCF South Bay continues to be very important to me. God Bless all of you and the new parents as they arrive. Thank you to all who keep this meeting going—
Sincerely, Melissa Clifford

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 _____

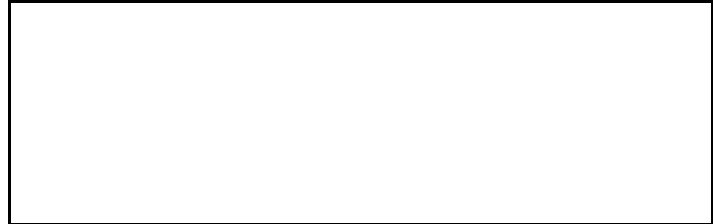
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
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June 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.