



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

July 2024 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING

**will be July 11th, the second
Thursday of the month at 7:00 P.M.
(See room change 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 **EAST** 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.

Due to the holiday, we will meet The SECOND Thursday, of the month on July 11th. The meeting will start with "Dreams, Signs, and Unusual Happenings."

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccias79@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.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171
(310) 963-4646
www.tcfsbla.org

Chapter Co-Leaders:
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (310) 530-8489
j.mantyla@att.net
Leo & Connie Licciardone (310) 292-5381
Conniestar58@gmail.com

The National Office of TCF
P.O. Box 3696
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
Toll free (877) 969-0010
www.compassionatefriends.org

Due to the July 4th holiday, we will meet The SECOND Thursday, of the month. The July 11th meeting will start with “**Dreams, Signs, and Unusual Happenings.**” Some people have had a strong vision, dream or unusual experience since they lost a child. Some even contact psychics in hope of getting answers. No matter what your beliefs, these questions and feeling are very common after losing a child. Many bereaved parents and siblings feel their loved one close to them at certain moments. Some have had a dream that reassured them their child is okay. Others have smelled a certain scent, heard their child call their name or heard a baby crying in the night. For some people, just reading a poem takes on a new meaning when you are grieving. It feels like it is a message directly from their loved one. Skeptics may say it is wishful thinking. Believers may say it was a distinct knowledge coming from within. Others may feel it was a turning point in their grief. Some may long for such an experience and wonder why they have not had something similar. We will be sharing things that have happened in our grief, and together will try to understand their meanings. Our purpose is not to judge, but rather to allow you a safe place to share your experiences and questions and listen to the experiences of others as you draw your own conclusions. We will have handouts and stories on the subject for you to take home. Please join us in our new meeting room which is located off the patio.

The Light Within

Many grieving parents and siblings long for a sign that their dead child, sister or brother, is not "lost" to them. So it is quite normal that griever often have moments when they feel somehow "in touch" with the dead child. This feeling may be triggered by a dream that was clearer than other dreams - our awareness seemed heightened, our dream experience was immediate direct, unmistakably "true". Perhaps we were startled by an event that brought the dead child to our presence in an oddly tangible way. We may have visited a psychic who comforted us with sensitive thoughts and messages.

And so we find her/his image in familiar places: we hear her/him speak words within our mind; we feel a touch, a breath, a presence unbelievably close. But we are expected and we expect

ourselves to accept only those things which "make sense" in terms of what the human mind, at present, can recognize as "a fact".

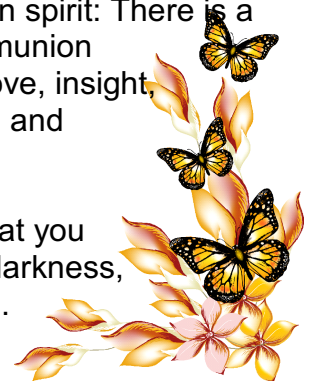
Some of us can take unusual occurrences in stride, but many more, for reasons of faith or logic, are shaken and even disturbed by such events. We worry about offending some requirements of tradition or religion. We wonder are we losing our mind, are we mentally sound, or has the fact of our child's death completely distorted our senses?

Don't be alarmed. The first thing to remember is that all things which happen are natural, by definition. The so-called supernatural is only a word coined to describe natural things that do not fit into the framework of what we are at the present time able to understand. We only have to consider, for instance, that 200 years ago television would have been regarded as supernatural: actually, TV was even then a natural possibility, but no human had yet been able to put its components into practice.

In a similar way, we may not see the factors at work when we feel "in touch" with a dead child. But the idea of such communication can become more understandable, when we remember how connected to most of our children's experiences we are. To some extent, our children's responses are as familiar to us as our own thoughts. Of course, we do not completely and always know how our children feel about absolutely everything just as we do not always exactly know our own mind. (But we have probably internalized our children's way of communicating so well, that we can share thoughts after a child is gone, in a very immediate way—whether this should be called psychic or not is beside the point.

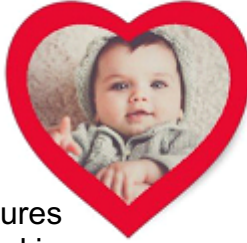
We can be "in touch" with our dead children, sisters and brothers, who exist in us from the depth of a shared life. Sometimes we hear their words, sometimes we recognize them in images, or sometimes we feel their touch. This is our legacy, given to help us heal and grow in spirit: There is a light of understanding and communion within us, softly illuminated by love, insight, and familiarity. Find its comfort, and trust its wisdom. -- Sascha

Perhaps the Butterfly is proof that you can go through a great deal of darkness, yet become something beautiful.



Love Lives On

Those we love are never really lost to us--
 We feel them in so many special ways--
 through friends they always cared about
 and dreams they left behind, in beauty that they
 added to our days ... in words of wisdom we still
 carry with us and memories that never will be gone
 ... Those we love are never really lost to us--
 For everywhere their special love lives on.
 --Amanda Bradley



Pictures from the Heart

Since we have lost our children,
 part of what remains of them are pictures
 from the heart, which are those mental images we
 hold so dear. For some of us these pictures are
 memories of what had been, and for others these
 pictures are dreams of what might have been. And
 for some of us these pictures are a little of both.
 For us, dreams and memories are really the same.
 It is the dimension where our children now reside.

In a sense, dreams are nothing more than
 memories of the future, because we remember our
 children by the dreams we had for them; and
 memories are nothing more than dreams of the
 past, because to remember them is certainly to
 dream of them. I believe it is incorrect to think that
 someone will not hurt as much because they only
 had their child for a little while or to think that
 someone will not hurt as much because their child
 had the chance to grow up. In these dreams and
 memories, these pictures from the heart, all of our
 children are infants and all of our children have
 grown up. The sadness and pain comes from the
 broken heart, the memories and the dreams from
 the pieces that remain.

--Kenneth Hensley TCF Nashville, TN

He Only Took My Hand

Last night while I was trying to sleep
 My son's voice I did hear,
 I opened my eyes and looked around,
 But he did not appear.
 He said, "Mom you've got to listen,
 You got to understand,
 God didn't take me from you, mom,
 He only took my hand.
 When I called out in pain that day,
 The moment that I died,

He reached down and took my hand,
 And pulled me to His side.
 He pulled me up and saved me
 From the misery and pain.
 My body was hurt so badly,
 I could never be the same.
 My search is really over now,
 I've found happiness within,
 All the answers to my empty dreams
 And all that might have been.
 I love you all and miss you so,
 And I'll always be nearby.
 My body's gone forever.
 But my spirit will never die.
 And so, you must all go on now.
 And live, and understand .
 God did not take me from you,
 He only took my hand."
 --Author Unknown

Jamie's Joy

"On the day our very own angel, Jamie, was
 born, we knew he was an old soul. He had the
 deepest eyes, and the smile on his face told you he
 knew something. He seemed very wise. We called
 him our "Little Buddha."

... When he was two-and-a-half years old, he
 spontaneously told me the story of how he
 picked us as parents. He explained very
 confidently that he was up in heaven with an
 angel and that he saw us on the bed. He told
 the angel that he wanted to be with us and
 then slid down a long tunnel into my tummy!
 ...Losing Jamie reshaped and redefined my
 life. It has brought an unrelenting depth of pain and
 a deepened compassion, developing my
 relationship to those without their bodies in
 profound ways that has allowed me to less
 fearfully, more loudly and fully, live intertwining their
 legacies into the tapestry of my own life – an
 honoring and remembering, rather than a letting go
 and "forgetting."

...Lastly, and firstly, I am a divinely made human,
 here to practice healing for myself, others and the
 planet through sharing my passion, compassion,
 love and authenticity to continually grow into who I
 was born to be.

--Honoring Grief, Creating Legacy, Celebrating Life
 Self Published Amazon Books

The Robin's Song

Posted on April 15th, 2021

It's spring once again. Our part of the world is turning back towards the sun; trees are leafing out; wildflowers are blooming. Robins are again singing to one another. And, I believe, also singing to those who are grieving.

Before my daughter Lori died, I was under the misconception that only the English robin had a glorious song. That smaller, red-breasted scalawag of a bird delights all who hear it, and I had felt that we in the United States had been short-changed when they'd misnamed its larger, boring American cousin the same sweet name. All I'd ever heard our robins do was cheep!

Then one June day, almost a year after Lori died, during one of the darkest times of my grief, my ears and heart flew open with surprise at a song I heard outside my window. I distinctly heard, in the midst of my pain, a bird singing loudly and clearly, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio! . . . Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I went outside to see what marvelous bird might have been sent to sing to me. I could barely see the bird at the top of the neighbor's poplar tree, so, while hoping this exotic, magical bird wouldn't fly away while I was gone, I went to find our binoculars.

Rushing back, I could hear the bird from each room in the house. After adjusting the binoculars, I was truly amazed to see one of our "boring" American robins come clearly into view! As he continued singing clear as day, "Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheerio!" I marveled at this special message and wondered if my robin was the only one who sang these words. So I looked it up in my Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds and found that my robin was not an anomaly, but that robins are considered "the true harbinger of spring, singing "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily."

I stood there that day filled with wonder. I wasn't hearing things; there it was in the bird book: "Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily." I thought to myself, "Cheerily . . . No, that isn't what I hear."

We had lived in England for a year and our family, especially Lori, who loved to put on an English accent, often said "Cheerio!" to one another when we meant, "Goodbye" or "See you later!" There was no doubt in my mind as I stood there listening. It WAS cheerio. Lori could have found no more perfect way to try to cheer me up AND say "hello!"



Angels Among Us

Our Angels are among us
 We see them everyday
 In all the forms that God created...
 They are with us along life's way.
 We see them in the sunrise,
 That brightens and warms our soul.
 We feel them in the summer breeze
 That chases away our cold.
 They are there among the flowers...
 Their sweet scent a memory of love.
 They soar with the eagles,
 As they fly so high above.
 The night will find them in the stars,
 Lighting our path below.
 And even in our dreams,
 Their presence we'll still know.
 As the snow melts with the sun,
 And spring flowers peek through their beds,
 They come on the wings of butterflies,
 And flutter about our heads.
 They are telling us they are with us,
 And will be forever more...
 Until it's time for us to meet again,
 As we pass through heaven's door.
 --Jacquelyn M. Comeaux
 Copyright 2001 Reprinted by permission of author

Summer Delight

Where is the child who skipped through the sprays of summer rain and laughed his way into my heart? Where is the boy who climbed my trees and spied on me from behind the leaves? Where is the child with the suntanned legs who ran Fourth -of-July races in green parks? Where is the sleepy child who wrapped his arms around my neck and said, "When I grow up, I gonna marry you, Mom?"

He's here. He twines around our past, around my future, and takes me back home, and makes me young again as sure as summer comes. A suntanned spirit with an impish grin still whispers in my ear that stars are not stars at all but lightening bugs he's captured in a jar. In his youth he's my summer's glow, the sunshine in my garden, my comfort on long, hot, summer nights of remembering.

Where is the child that once played among my summer flowers? He darts and runs away as I idly dream of yesterday, at once elusive yet so near. Oh, I'm sure he's here. I'm sure I saw him just a

minute ago. Or was it just a touch of summer madness that made me think I'd greeted him? Oh, where is that child of summer gladness? His laughter slides down summer rainbows and captures me with unbound glee. His summer brownness runs barefoot on my heart. With sun-bleached hair, he smiles at me from photos from summers past, and I remember love.
-- Fay Harden, TCF/Tuscaloosa, Alabama

The Fourth of July

The Fourth of July is now spent without you,
This favorite day is now only dark and blue.
The day with picnics has only clouds and rain
No sun will shine to ease this pain
The BBQ sits abandoned and cold
No longer used for your treats of old.
No swimming, no baseball, no games do we play
No ice cream or watermelon makes pain go away.
The fireworks display do not seem as bright
The colors are dull and give off no light.
This is the part of the day that you loved the most,
With star bursts and rockets that flew higher than
the rest.
The Fourth of July, this party each year
Is now just a day, this has become so very clear.
It gives me no joy without you here.
Your holiday of choice -- we miss you my dear.
--© Karen Lynch, June 6, 1997

July-Fourth

Each year on the Fourth of July we celebrate the birth of a great nation—a nation of people united in a dream. It was through hope, determination and a bonded strength that America strived to achieve their dream of freedom-- to be a free nation.

Nothing, however, is achieved without a strong will. We too, as bereaved parents, are fighting a battle to be free— free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be able to enjoy life again. You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for YOUR dream. There is peace to be found in freedom!
--TCF, Holmdel, NJ



The Decade Difference

A TCF meeting is the place to come for compassion, friendship, coping skills, understanding, hope, and more. Many bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings recall a special person they met, or the welcoming, accepting environment they encountered at their first meeting. Some seasoned grievors stay active in the chapter, or return to monthly meetings, to reach out to the newly bereaved with encouragement and support—grateful for the same encouragement and support they experienced in their early grief.

“Helping is Healing” is a phrase often said and easily understood by chapter members who assist in any way, big or small, behind the scenes or with their presence. We’re grateful to all who get involved! Get to know some of our Chapter’s Steering Committee members as they reflect on their volunteer participation within our chapter: I’m so grateful for the steering committee for encouraging me to play a bigger role in our TCF chapter. I was finally ready to give back after being seen and heard with my own grief.

--Maggie Bauer, Sibling Loss Facilitator

But Your Son WANTED to Die—Mine Didn't

I cringed as once again I heard this remark, repeated so often since Warren took his life 3½ years ago. Even now, when I thought I had steeled myself to the harsh meaning of the words, they still left me hurt and demolished. Is it all that simple? Could anyone 'feeling good' just choose to die like that—if they knew the pain and suffering that then engulfs their surviving family?

How can I explain why he died when I do not really know myself? How can I make anyone understand his emotional pain, increasingly obvious to us, so skillfully masked from others? Our son was so handsome, intelligent and sensitive. It is still incredible that he shot himself one morning after returning from the hospital 'cured' of his terrible depression. Our beautiful first-born baby grew into a perfect son, but somewhere, somehow, our masterpiece had a flaw as cruel and as tenacious as any disease that strikes any other young person.

So, until research proves otherwise, we have to go along with the words of Professor Erwin Ringel that "SUICIDE CANNOT REALLY BE

CHOSEN—since an intense and overwhelming inner compulsion renders any free choice null and void."

Our loss is as great as any other parent. We grieve just as deeply. Remember this and do not judge, we beg. We, and all the Survivors of Suicide suffer too much already from a horrendous tragedy that can, and does, happen to anyone. Our Kids Loved Us—And We Love Them!

--Maureen Hargreaves, TCF Melbourne, Australia
In Memory of my son, Warren

Grandma Wanna-Be

Last fall, my son Darick and his wife, Jenny, announced that we would be grandparents this summer. At 47, I no longer had a desire to raise another child of my own and was already a self-confessed "grandma wanna-be." Their news made my heart dance. My joy, however, was turned to anger when the pregnancy ended in miscarriage.

As a grandma wanna-be with that first grandchild on the way, I was picturing myself baby-sitting and cooing my way to old age with this child and those to follow cuddled around me. I bought patterns for sewing baby clothes and books filled with baby projects. Would the new parents want the crib my children had slept in? If not, where would I set it up for those visits to Grandma's house? My thoughts were overflowing with being a grandma.

After a one o'clock a.m. call from Darick, I knew that Jenny was probably miscarrying. My knees hit the floor and I sobbed my prayers. "Please, God, don't let this child die, too!" I implored. When it was confirmed that this child would never be born, all of my happy imaginings were replaced by anger. The raging thoughts of a protective mother quickly replaced those of the grandma-to-be.

In September of 1994, our only daughter, 13-year-old Melissa, died in a car accident. Our sons, Darick and Wade, were also in the car. At 15 and 11, respectively, they were devastated emotionally though they had only minor physical injuries. We have all worked hard at living without Melissa, but some days it seems that there is a dark cloud hanging over us determined to block the sunshine from our lives.

Darick blamed himself for the accident. He put himself in a world of self-induced guilt, a place from which we sometimes wondered if he would ever

return. Retrieving his soul has been a long and arduous journey, Jenny beside him every step of the way. I knew immediately upon hearing the baby was lost that he would somehow go back there, which he did. In his mind, Melissa's and his baby's deaths were connected by his feelings of helplessness in the face of tragedy.

The fact that this could happen, placing him back in that hell, made my blood boil. Those beautiful children had been through enough! Why couldn't Darick and Jenny have just this one blessing free of heartache?

Many people reminded me of all the medical reasons for miscarriage, making it sound like some grand act of mercy. They said that the baby was very likely genetically damaged and, if brought to term and live birth, it may have been afflicted with any number of maladies.

I know they were trying to make me feel better, and it is likely they were right, but their words only made me angrier. "There didn't have to be anything wrong with this baby," my mind screamed! Babies are carried to term and born every day. Why did this one have to be damaged? Darick and Jenny needed this joy. And we were already grieving the loss of the grand-children Melissa would never deliver. Wasn't that enough?

I did not feel guilty or sorry for my anger. I have learned through grieving for Melissa that anger is a natural part of grief. Until now, I simply felt that it was unfinished business. I needed time to come to a place of peace in the face of another child lost to us.

When Melissa died, as deep as my grief was, I rejoiced in the lives of my sons. The fact that they survived that accident was declared a miracle, and it spun a web of protection around my broken heart. Then, in the summer of 2001, Wade was in another accident. The fact that he walked away from it only sore and bruised was declared another miracle. I remember the gratitude and grace I felt when I wrapped my arms around him and sobbed for the words I could not speak.

That memory began to emerge as my initial anger over being denied our first grandchild lost some of its steam. My gratitude for lives saved began to spin around in my head, seeking domination over the anger for lives lost. As much as I wanted to let go of the anger and embrace gratitude, I just couldn't find the resolution I sought. Until now. It is summer again, 2002. Wade was in a third accident, this time escaping the rolled



vehicle only seconds before it burst into flames within sight of where Melissa had died. When I arrived at the scene, I walked past the incinerated mass of metal. Again, I could not speak, but only held Wade until I could peel my arms from his healthy, whole self. I was calm and in control until later that night when I was alone.

The mash of emotions in my head and heart were too great to hold inside. I was in my car so I opened the roof, cranked up the music, and sobbed for twenty miles. The mother of Melissa grieved yet again. The grandmother of an unborn child also grieved as the mother of Darick fought for rights to her anger. The mother of Wade wailed prayers of thanks. From this tangle of emotions, one truth emerged: As long as I choose to embrace the miracles around me, my heart will dance. Whether in the slow dance of grief or skipping to the beat as I cuddle and coo with grandbabies yet to come, hope and joy will emerge in the rhythms of the dance.

--Reprinted with permission from We Need Not Walk Alone

Newly Bereaved...

How My Grief Has Changed

Newly bereaved parents will often ask "How long will it take before I start to feel different?" I remember after my daughter died searching for an answer to this same question. Looking back at my own experience I think what I was really asking was "How long will it take to wake from this nightmare and have my daughter with me again?"

For a very long period, deep in my soul, I still held out hope that this tragedy was not really my life, that there was a faint possibility that either I could fix this or that it truly was a bad dream. I could say the words "my daughter died" and could acknowledge the reality of it but that was at an intellectual level. My heart however could not accept this.

My early grief was all encompassing. I was feeling the deepest sadness a human being could experience while at the same time feeling untethered to the rest of the world.

Over the next few years, as I integrated back into the world, my grief remained. But in addition to my grief, I realized I could also carry with me things like happiness and even joy. At this point I still

wondered how long grief could remain such a large part of my life.

While I knew I would never stop missing my daughter I still expected that at some point there would be an end to my grief. The thought that grief would be my companion for the remainder of my life was not something that I thought possible. I was wrong.

Many people who have not walked this path talk about parents eventually accepting their child's death. What I came to understand is that it is not about accepting the **loss** but about accepting the **grief**. It is two totally different things. My grief, as I began to realize, was as important a part of my existence as my personality, my love, my faith, my joy. This perspective allowed me to stop fearing my grief or searching for a way out. It changed everything.

At the beginning of this journey our grief is all encompassing. Over time, while it never leaves us, our relationship with it changes. Rather than fear grief we can accept it as an important part of who we are and who we will become.

-- TCF Chapter North Shore – Boston, MA

Seasoned Greivers....

The Space Between Thoughts

You are no longer in my thoughts constantly. You are now dwelling in the space between thoughts, a part of my every moment whether joyful or sad or in between, or both simultaneously. I walk, talk, work, play and you surround me. You are in the sparkle of my smile the wisdom in my thinking the rainbow circles in my life. As long as I live, you will live. As I learn, you are teaching, not only me but all those who are in my life today. You are a blessing, dear child, for all you were and all you are and all you forever will be.

-- Genesse Bourdeau Gentry, from her book, "Catching the Light, Coming back to Life after the Death of a Child"

"Each of us travels this road differently, but we owe it to ourselves to do our grief work. Not easy work, not fun work, not immediately rewarding work, but this is work, just the same."

--Annette Mennen Baldwin



Looking Forward...

A Moving Experience

We are sorting through and packing up for a move. It's worse than your usual move from one home of 10 years to another; the house we live in now is the last one we shared with our son, Aaron. We are sorting through and packing up memories, along with the tools, dishes, and books.

I have heard other bereaved parents talk about moving after their child died. For some, it was too painful to stay in a house that held so many images. They spoke of not being able to get away from the sorrow, of running into the pain every time they walked through the door. We never felt that way about our home. This was a place Aaron loved, and we have been very happy here—the last earthly house that Aaron knew.

I know that we will be happy in our new home as well, but that house won't hold a breath of him, as this one does. Now, I can walk out onto the patio and still see him in my mind's eye, drifting across the pool on a raft. I can easily imagine him coming out of his bedroom door, calling "Mom . . ." as he so often did. The new house won't have any history with Aaron, and so there is a feeling of loss in leaving this old place.

I know that Aaron goes where I go; he is a part of me always and forever. Nonetheless, I will miss walking familiar streets where once he walked. I will miss the feeling of connection as I lie on the side of the hill at the park and watch the clouds drift by. I will miss the scent of his closet and the view from his window. There are stories in these rooms and this neighborhood, stories woven from the fabric of my son's life. I may carry the stories with me, but I am leaving behind the props.

We have packed up his baby book, the special school projects, and the box of cards we received when he died. Hannah still has his treasured rocks in her room, and the boxes of comic books so carefully preserved and alphabetized are ready for transport. Paul is going through the collections of action figures and baseball cards to determine what can be sold or given away, and I expect that his raggedy old "bud" from infancy, No -Way Noah, will take up residence somewhere in the new house.

But how do you pack up his passion for life? I know what to do about things I can hold in my



hands; what I want to know is – how am I to carry his heart?

I've had a vision of these rooms, empty of all our things: I am doing one last walk through, taking one last look, saying one final goodbye. It is a scene that brings with it a gentle sorrow, and though I know we are moving forward and that all is well, in my heart there is a sense that I am somehow leaving Aaron behind. It makes me think back to those first months when I could not leave the house, even overnight. I told Paul, I know this sounds crazy, but I feel that if I leave I might come home and find a note on the door that says: "Hi, Mom! Sorry I missed you. Catch you later. Love, Aaron."

Six years later, I am not anxious about leaving home; I don't worry that I might miss a visit. The shock and disbelief of early grief has passed away and the reality of Aaron's death has settled on my soul. Though I know that I will never again see my son walk through the door, I also know that I know—I will never leave Aaron behind. He goes where I go. Still, I will be leaving a piece of my heart in the old house. Should you visit, listen for the gentle beat. You might sense its rhythm somewhere about—gazing out a tree-shaded window, lingering over a bloom in the garden, or drifting gently across the sky. And you will know that a house holds more than the stuff of memories. A house can hold a heart.

--Frankie Wilford TCF Carrollton- Farmers Branch, TX In Memory of my son, Aaron

Friends And Family...

Please Remember

You Don't Just Lose Someone Once

You lose them over and over,
sometimes many times a day.
When the loss, momentarily forgotten,
creeps up, and attacks you from behind.
Fresh waves of grief as the realization hits home,
they are gone.

Again.

You don't just lose someone once,
you lose them every time you
open your eyes to a new dawn,
and as you awaken, so does your memory,
so does the jolting bolt of lightning
that rips into your heart, they are gone.

Again.

Losing someone is a journey, not a one-off.
 There is no end to the loss,
 there is only a learned skill on
 how to stay afloat, when it washes over.
 Be kind to those who are sailing this stormy sea,
 they have a journey ahead of them,
 and a daily shock to the system
 each time they realize, they are gone,
 Again.
 You don't just lose someone once,
 you lose them every day,
 for a lifetime.
 --By Donna Ashworth

Helpful Hint...



Remember, in one sense there is no death. The life of a soul on earth lasts beyond her departure. You will always feel that life touching yours, that voice speaking to you, that spirit looking out of other eyes, talking to you in the familiar things she touched, worked with, loved as familiar friends. She lives on in your life and in the lives of all others that knew her.
 -- Angelo Patri Madison TCF Winnipeg, Canada

Welcome...



Welcome To Compassionate Friends

If you have never attended a TCF meeting, you probably wonder what it is all about. You know that your personal world seemed to come to an end with the death of your child, and you wonder what a bunch of people you don't even know could do for you.

At TCF meetings, even if we've just met, we seem to know each other. There is an almost instant palpable bond -- difficult to envision unless you have experienced it. We have all had our worlds torn apart. Each of us has felt guilty about smiling or laughing or having good feelings again. Together, we have helped ourselves, and each other, through those agonies and doubts. We don't have to say, "I can imagine what you are going through," or, "I can imagine how you feel." We can and do say, "We know what you are going through, and we know how you feel."

We have made progress, in spite of having times where we didn't feel like pulling ourselves together -- whatever that means -- and in spite of having very little hope. We have made progress in

spite of discouraging setbacks, because we could turn to The Compassionate Friends.

The world is a lonely place to begin with. For the grief-stricken bereaved, it can get ever-so-much lonelier. The Compassionate Friends can help. "We need not walk alone."
 --John Curnutt TCF, Central Oregon

Book In Review...



Butterflies, Angels, & Roses, Messages of hope and healing from a bereaved mother's heart by Francis Wohlenhaus-Munday. This book is a testament to a grieving mother who chose to pick the flowers on her journey, and share them with us. Fran's symbols of butterflies, angels and roses offer comfort to those who mourn.

Grief Comes in One Size

Grief comes in one size: Extra Large. If we tuck it away in the bottom drawer where it never sees the light of day, it remains exactly the same. On the other hand, if we wear it, feel it, talk about it and share it with others, it is likely that it will become faded, shrunk and worn, or will simply no longer fit. When grief has served its purpose, we are able to recognize the many gifts we have gained. 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

"The world loves closure, loves a thing that can, as they say, be gotten through. This is why it comes as a great surprise to find that loss is forever, that two decades after the event there are those occasions when something in you cries out at the continual presence of an absence."
 --Anna Quindlen



Our Children Remembered



Troy 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 Albarez

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

Cheianne 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
Bruns

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

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

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

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

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

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



Our Children Remembered



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

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

**Our Children Remembered**

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

Julie Catherine Thomas
Born: 1/80 Died: 9/2023
Mother: Mary Thomas

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.)

**A Birthday Tribute to:
Eric Douglas Vines
July 1976 to July 1991**



While staring at a Denny's menu the other day, there was a picture of banana chocolate chip pancakes. I chuckled as I remembered a time long ago, when Eric was four or five. Our intact family had gone out to a different Denny's and as his turn came to order, he asked for banana chocolate chip pancakes. The waitress said she was sorry but they didn't have chocolate chips, but they did have banana pancakes. Eric, pulled out a bag of chocolate chips he had snuck from the cupboard at home and shoved them into her hands as he said "that's ok, I brought you some."

We were all taken back for a moment and then we all started laughing. Here was this cute, curly haired little boy earnestly staring at her while holding the answer to his problem. Everyone around us was staring and smiling at their conversation. The waitress laughed as she took the bag out of his hand, and said he must really want banana chocolate chip pancakes... she'd see what she could do.

I love these unexpected memories that come out of nowhere all these years later and still bring back those special simple times in our lives that we treasure now more than ever. Happy Birthday Eric.

Love Mom

**A Birthday Tribute to:
Tiffany Lamb Corkins
July 1970– August 2005**



To my Dearest Daughter,
Happy Birthday July 20th. You would be 54 this year! I miss you everyday, think of what you would be doing now... Your boy are in the Military, right out of high school and doing well! We stay in touch always. The word has changed in the 19 years you've been gone. It lost a wonderful woman and so did I and your family.

There are so many things I miss about you. Your smile, your kindness, your intelligence, our talks, our hugs, trips, movies, Just You! This photo was in August 1997, your wedding! The most beautiful one I've been to before or since.

Love you, miss you forever, Mom X O

For Siblings...



What If?

We followed a silver Mustang to New York on Friday. My mother and I. Traveling from my home farther south. The boys buckled tightly in the back. It had black stripes on the hood and the windows were too dark to see inside. Like his.

We joined minds, spoke without speaking, and imagined the unimaginable... That he was still here. That it was his. His Mustang, zipping up and down the Belt Parkway in Canarsie, in Flatbush, in his Brooklyn. Visiting this and that, her and her, blasting his music, picking up the pieces, the bits, for the collection, for his soul. We imagined, jointly.

It's like we both heard the whisper; a soft, silent whisper, "What if?" "What if?" it said. What if October 22, 2009, never was? The cloudless sky on that sunny, sorrowful, unexpected day. The day my brother's soul ended its tangible journey beside us. The day that concluded us as we were and began as we are.

"What if?" we whispered. He whispered. What if... He was here all along? What if it was as simple as catching up to him on his drive? What if we would find him watching a waterfall in Saratoga? Eating a Klondike bar in Elmont? Outside of a repair shop, getting a car service that took a little too long. Or what if we found him parked in my mother's driveway in Queens at home?

What if we had just been blinded by a bizarre streak of glaring sunlight? Cast from a low-flying plane? It was possible because we grew up by the airport. What if we had missed him standing there all along, and that man we watched leave us on 10/22 wasn't my brother at all? It was someone else's brother, someone else's son, someone else's... What if when the glare cleared he would appear? Smirking. Buffing a small finger print from his side-view mirror and walking over to us with his heavy steps to make some joke about the latest current event. What if we had another chance to kiss his warm cheeks and cover him in our embrace? Make my mother smile again...from the inside? What if he could tickle my sons and meet my dear Wesley, his namesake?

We raced alongside that silver Mustang. Watching and waiting, wondering and willing, wondering and willing ...life. We wondered, "What

if?"

We tried desperately to mask the quick sounds of our breaths as we chased this dream. We chastised our souls for wanting to bound toward him and dance in the unimaginable. To morph what wasn't into what is and make this impossible our possible. But it wasn't... The universe curses us with unexplained gifts. That driver snuck off at an exit before we could see for ourselves, before we could answer, before we could reason...but left us...imagining, even for that moment, that second, in that small slither of unmovable, imaginable, glorious, beautiful space... What if?

--T.F. McCray Lovingly lifted from TCF, Otago, NZ Chapter newsletter. T.F. McCray is a lawyer, freelance writer, and married mother of two. She lost her brother Thomas Wesley Higdon Jr. at the age of 38 in 2009, from congestive heart failure.

My Dear Sis,

I had to go before you,
My life on earth was through.
But I will stop just inside Heaven's Door,
And there I will wait for you.
At night look across the star filled skies,
Past the moon and even beyond.
You should know my leaving could never break,
This Heart's undying bond.
I had to go, you see,
My journey to earth was through.
You know I will be close behind,
I will never be far from you.
Across the far reaches of time and space,
My Love will always reach as far.
For you will forever, carry a piece of my Heart,
No matter where you are.
We had no way of knowing who would remain,
Or even who would be first on Heaven's Shore.
But you'll find me already here
I'll be waiting just inside Heaven's Door.
Missing you today, yesterday & forever!
Love, from your sister
--Author unknown



For Grandparents...

When Dandelions are Roses

Just for you," he said as he gave me a handful of dandelions. I took them from his smudgy little

hand, reached for my prettiest vase, and set them in a special place, where I could watch them wilt and fade.

Remembering that he had said, "I picked them just for you," the dandelions turned to roses. A beautiful, priceless bouquet he brought to me on his birthday - yellow roses, my favorite.

--Family and Friends of Murder Victims West End Chapter, Alta Loma, CA

From Our Members...



What If?

My name is Nancy and I work as a para-professional with special education children in Long Beach, NY. Each day I walk in my classroom and feel sad for those children whose lives may be taken away by the wrong choices. Once, my child, Jesse, was so full of life too. How I wish I could go back!

Not a day goes by that I don't wonder what my son would be doing if he were still on this earth. He was a talented wrestler for his high school, a talented drummer from a very early age, and had a gift of making people laugh.

Jesse was diagnosed as ADHD very early in life. His energy and wit were contagious, but in school it was an issue. He felt different even during the short period of time where he took his medicine as prescribed.

Jesse stopped his ADHD medicine and, I believe, started self medicating with Xanax and Valium. I searched and searched for a rehab that took 15-year-olds, but after 10 days in the facility I found, our insurance refused to pay. I had to bring him home. I didn't have the financial capability to keep him there for a month. I believe that was his one chance at life, before his addiction progressed. He tried again and again, and the ups and downs went on and on. My hope of him being able to stop was diminishing. I used to fear that I would get that phone call every time the phone rang. His brothers tried to talk to him, but he hid his ongoing addiction from everyone.

When Jesse was 19, Hurricane Sandy hit our town. At that time, he was in recovery for two years. Within minutes, our house was 75-percent destroyed. All our possessions on the first floor were destroyed and our cars were gone. I spent the next year trying to find ways to fix my house

back up and make sure all my sons had transportation to get to college.

I was also looking for a job, as the hospital I worked in at that time was destroyed and condemned. In the middle of it all, Jesse relapsed. Jesse confided in me that his addiction to OxyContin had turned into a heroin addiction: it was easier to find and cheaper. Once again, I found myself writing letters to rehabs. I tried everyone, even the President of the United States and Eric Clapton, who owns a rehab. I was desperate and Jesse was too. My bank account was wiped out, between the rehabs and the storm. All I wanted was my son back!

After a short stay at a rehab in Florida, he remained in recovery for about four months. He was so happy to be home. He rode his bike on the boardwalk, played his drums, hung out with his brothers and friends, and even praised my home cooked meals. Life seemed normal again.

But on Thursday, December 12, 2013, Jesse came to talk to me. He was noticeably high. My heart sank. I decided for once not to talk with him or nag him in any way, and just keep the peace. I had every intention of having a talk with him the next morning. But on Friday, I was still upset so I went straight to work instead.

My phone kept vibrating in my pocket and I walked into a hallway to look at it. It was a text from my son, Zach. Mom, pick up your phone. Mom, Jesse is dead in his bed!

That is the day my heart broke forever. I am still broken and miss my child more and more each day that passes. I am still angry with our health insurance system and the lack of rehabs for all ages.

It will be four years this December that I lost my sweet, kind, funny boy. I am crying right now at the thought of never seeing him again. His addiction killed him and affected everyone in my family. His addiction wiped us out financially. But I would do it all again, for him.

I love you, Jesse Mark Barnett: always and forever.

--Nancy Rossetti – Blog: People Facing Addiction, Oct. 16, 2017 Submitted by Linda Curtis

Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at

ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. The next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.



Flash Zoom Meetings... are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration. The intent is to check in on each other and share, nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccias79@gmail.com for the link.

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

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

Lynntcf@aol.com

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: July first for August 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

goodgriefresources.com

bereavedparentsusa.org

healingafterloss.org

survivorsofsuicide.com

taps.org (military death)

save.org (suicide/depression)

pomc.com (families of murder victims)

grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)

www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)

Griefwords.com (for grandparents)



childloss.com

griefwatch.dom

opentohope.com

webhealing.com

alivelone.org

angelmoms.com

M.A.D.D..org

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

Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

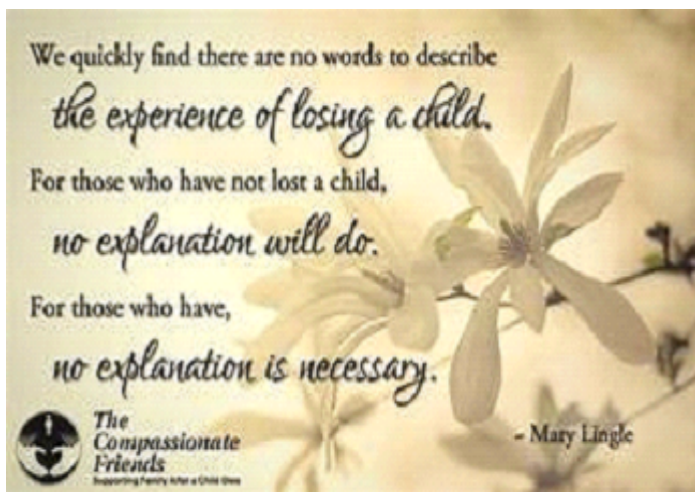
Kitty Edler

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 Eric Douglas Vines, July 1976 to July 1991. As your birthday/anniversary month arrives, so do all the memories of past birthdays. I sit here remembering the 14 parties we had with you and wish you were here to share more of them with us all. Sending Happy Birthday wishes to you...
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
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 3223
90503



– Return Service Requested –



July 2024

Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



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.

©2024 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER

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