



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

November 2024 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING

**will be November, 7th, the first
Thursday of the month at 7:00 P.M.**

LOCATION:

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

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

The Nov. 7th meeting will start with **"I Don't Feel Very Thankful."**

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 Denny's Restaurant, 3060 Sepulveda BL, Torrance at 1 pm, most Fridays. All are invited. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming.

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

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The Nov. 7th meeting will start with “I Don’t Feel Very Thankful.” Thanksgiving is coming and all I can focus on is how much I DON’T feel thankful for, after the death of my child. There are times in life when we’re allowed to be a little ungrateful, to focus on what is missing instead of what we still have! To experience overwhelming fear and loss and anger. When we’re allowed to want to scream that “I just can’t do this.” Just because it’s November do I really have to plan a holiday around feelings of gratitude and thankfulness? Many bereaved families have all they can do to face another day without their child here with them. Other bereaved people have had time to learn about their feelings of loss and have found ways to incorporate Thanksgiving into the here and now. We invite you to join us as share how we acknowledge our loss and still share the love we have for our missing children with our friends and family. By remembering to be grateful every day for whatever you can find to be grateful for, we will be honoring our children. Family, friends, the home you live in, the food on your table, your dog or cat, anything! By taking stock in what we are grateful for, life doesn’t seem quite so full of despair which in turn helps us all in our grief.

Gratitude in Grief...What?...

The month of November, with Veterans' Day, Harvest celebrations, World Kindness Day (November 13th) and Thanksgiving is the month to celebrate gratitude, traditions, food, fun, feasting and family. But it may not be for many people. When life has been thrown on to a foundation of sadness, loss and pain, none of these are easy to face let alone enjoy.

How can I possibly feel gratitude when I am grieving the loss of my loved one? How can I even recognize it? What do I even have to be grateful for?

Before answering those questions we need to look at the reality of the road of grief...

Early Grief - The Learning Stage

Early in one's grief the watchword is stuck not movement. This early grief is for learning about your feelings, your behaviors, your pain, your suffering. You are learning about your internal world; the world of pain, suffering and grief. It cannot be about movement (growth) while you are discovering this new world.



You need to learn about this new world that has been set forth in front of you. You will learn as you go as you are unfamiliar with the territory. You have to learn about your expectations and your possibilities.

There is a lot to learn in the expectations of grief. You will learn about yourself, other people, how the world addresses death and grieving and how YOU address death and grieving.

Possibilities is a more difficult idea to grasp in grief due to the (usual) lack of experience of the griever. One must recognize that grieving is similar to a new relationship, a new marriage or the beginning of life. We all begin in learners' mode.

In this learning stage, the griever does not recognize their ability to change or to make decisions or to make any movement of any kind.

Allow yourself to experience what is occurring to you in the moment that you find yourself experiencing it. (feel your feelings) This is the ONLY way to get to and through any movement in your grief process. As painful as this is, every griever must go through this early learning stage of grieving to seek transformation.

Movement in Grief

Although it's well known that there are no stages to grief, it is absolutely important for grievers to move through this early learning period to be able to move in their own grief process. The grief process is not incremental steps; one step to the next point in your process. However, accepting and experiencing your early grief allows you to move through your process with you, with your learning, and with your abilities to see what is necessary for you in your own process and life.

Gratitude in Grief

Gratitude: the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful, appreciative of benefits received. It is not easy to understand how gratitude can help you in your grief process looking through the lens of pain. It will not allow for the feeling or the understanding of gratitude. Also, it is extremely difficult to see any possibilities in the early learning period. But, by allowing yourself to experience the early grieving, to step back, look at you and your process, you will be able to gain a larger perspective which can lead to a larger view of your life.

Similar to grief, learning to be and living in gratitude is not an overnight process. Neither is it one size fits all nor does gratitude feel good automatically when one acknowledges gratitude for

the first time. Living in gratitude, like living in grief, is a process that evolves. It is a body, mind and soul process that takes much time, it takes much reasoning and it takes your heart opening to make your transformation possible. Have patience and compassion with yourself. Gratitude just might be the repaving for your road of grief....

--Chris Mulligan

Some Suggestions for Thanksgiving

Throughout our lives, expectations of things to come are based upon past experiences. If, in the past, you had set a glorious table and were the perfect host or hostess, it is very possible that friends and family will expect more of the same this year. They may not be aware that you are not looking toward the holidays with a fun and games attitude. They probably do not know that in anticipation of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah, you may feel anxiety and fear. They are probably thinking this year will be different and some sadness will accompany it, but I don't think they are aware of your anguish, especially if it's been "awhile."

I would like to suggest to you that in fairness to yourself you need to be honest about your feelings and, just as important, you need to communicate these feelings to those around you. I really don't think it is necessary for you to believe that because you set a tradition and always made the turkey, fried the latkes, and always had the family over, you need to feel obligated to do it again this year. Perhaps you would like to tell everyone:

- * Someone else will have to do dinner this year.
- * You want to make dinner in your home, but you need lots of help because you don't have the energy to do it.
- * You want to go to the parties, but you are afraid you may break down and cry and you want them to know in advance this is really okay.
- * You want to tell them it's okay to talk about your child. Not to, makes it very uncomfortable.

The list goes on, but the point is that to pretend everything is "just fine" is a lie, and that's not fair to you or to the people who you love.

-- Diane Zarnkoff TCF, Simi Valley, CA

Coping With Grief During the Holidays

- Talk about your grief. Don't worry about bringing anyone down. You're allowed to grieve and talk about it.
- Create boundaries with your time. If you need to take some time for you, do it.
- Find a way to honor them. Start a new tradition that honors their memory.
- Set realistic expectations. You will probably be sad or maybe cranky and that's okay.
- Allow yourself to feel all of your feelings. Resentment and anger are normal.
- Practice self-care. Check-in with yourself on a regular basis and meet those needs.

BlessingManifesting

A New Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving morning 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my life forever. Within seconds our whole household was in chaos and shock our beautiful daughter Nancy had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than 24 hours before. She had wished us a "happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with "I love you, Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is: a minute, an hour, a day at a time....putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated paper plates and napkins in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgiving after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also. Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings. Today with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner.

It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much more to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends, and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that those blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.

--Mary Conway TCF, Nashville, TN
In Memory of my daughter, Nancy

Just A Note

Today I wrote a note to a bereaved mother... I wanted to say don't believe all those sympathy cards. The ones that say "time heals" and "God only takes the best" and "may your sorrows be lessened." You'll only be disappointed. I wanted to say this is the most heart-wrenching, chest crushing, breath stealing tragedy on earth. I wanted to tell her there will be days she wants to die, and friends who will not understand some of the things she does or says.

I wanted to tell her she will still feel her child's presence at times, sometimes so strongly that it is as if they are dancing just at the edge of whatever activity is going on. And other times she might not feel their presence at all.

I wanted to tell her that her life will not go back, that she will never be the same, because a piece of her left with her child. And that even though the pain does not go away, somehow her soul will eventually make enough room so she can hold it all— the grief, the pain, the joy and the love.

I wanted to tell her... but I didn't. Instead, I wrote this: I'm sending love, for words are pointless right now. And that is the truth.
--by Susi Costello Shared by Hope's Seed

"I became insane with long intervals of horrible insanity."

(Quote from Edgar Allan Poe, Jan 4, 1848, on the illness and eventual death of his wife)



Can you identify with the above quote? If so, then you have experienced the death of a loved one. It matters not who it was. Grief is grief. Years ago, I was asked by the bereaved parents' group of Tacoma Compassionate Friends to give a talk on the following topic: *What is the Difference between Going Crazy and Being Bereaved?* At the time I was teaching a college course in Abnormal Psychology in which we examined the symptoms, causes and treatments for mental disorders. I had learned a great deal from people coping with grief, the most important was: being bereaved feels like you are going crazy.

When I first got the invitation to speak to the Tacoma group, I briefly had this fantasy that I would stand in front of the group and say, "Thank you for inviting me to discuss the difference between going crazy and being bereaved. The

answer is: There is no difference. Thank you for having me." Of course I wouldn't say that. However, in a way you know, it's true.

That night, as I was driving to the Tacoma group, a song came on the radio by Don McLean: *Stary, Stary Night*. One of the phrases in the song is: "You suffer for your sanity." At that moment, it dawned on me that the group of bereaved parents I was on my way to meet was doing exactly that: Suffering for their sanity, something Poe experienced more than 100 years ago. As I listened to the words of the song, I also realized that, not more than ten miles from where this meeting was being held was Western State Hospital—a hospital for folks who were seriously mentally ill. Any of these parents could have ended up there by claiming that their child was not dead. Instead, they were sitting in a room clearly suffering for their sanity.

Like many bereaved people, you might have lapsed into brief periods of insanity when you said, "My daughter is at a friend's house." Or "My wife is at work." Or "My brother is at school. He'll be walking in the door any moment." You said these insane words to give your brain a brief respite from the horrible pain. And, then, in an instant, you were back to suffering the dreadful agony of sanity.

Is this crazy behavior? Not at all. It is what a sane person does. Ask around and you'll see you are not alone in attempting to escape from this horrible reality. You are living a nightmare from which you keep hoping you will awaken.

The people around you keep hoping that the "old you" will return. It won't. How could it? You are a different person who is going through an experience that would make *anyone* crazy. You have found that the world out there does not understand your craziness. How could they?

As you likely know, your job is to find other people who are experiencing a similar craziness. If you've not found these people, do whatever you can to discover them and, eventually, to look into their eyes. When you share your story and listen to theirs, you will find validation in your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Many bereaved people have said to me, "When I found these people, it literally saved my life." So, take your crazy grief and find these people. They are out there. And, when you do find them, thank them for sharing their gifts of caring with you. And you will find that one of these gifts is what most all bereaved people experience: insanity.

--Bob Baugher, Ph.D. www.bobbaugher.com

Find Thanks

The holiday for us to “Find Thanks” is coming up in a few weeks. What a strange saying to say or put in print, I used to think. After all, everyone can find something for which they are thankful, or so I thought. It doesn't necessarily mean that one can't sift out the bad things that come along in life, so we can be thankful... and we all have things like that that occur in our lives. But to have to take time to actually think hard about our situation in life to find something for which we can give thanks? It just doesn't happen! Or so I thought.

I changed my mind when my oldest son died and I was plunged into the darkest period of my life...and I, like everyone else, have had a few dark periods before. I didn't know what to do and I just threw myself into my job and whatever else I could, so as to not think about what had happened. And I found myself truly fearful about the future. In short, after thinking about what just about every person who has had a child die...who I've heard about or to whom I've talked...I didn't know how I could go on and I was a woeful resource for helping my wife and family in their grief...for them and myself.

Fortunately, TCF...which my wife, Rosina, found out about after our trying church grief groups and other approaches...changed that way of thinking for me. There were other people who had children who had died and while it was initially disconcerting to see them smile and laugh with one another, and it gave us hope that someday we would be like that.

I remember one woman we met through TCF who had five children die...FIVE! And she found her way of surviving through TCF. As for Rosina and I, we found our way to survive, also thanks to TCF. We found something to truly be thankful for: TCF and the people we have come to know in it. It gave us our life back when neither of us thought we would ever have any joy in life again.

When our second son died nine years ago, we were devastated again, but we knew, deep down, what the 'road' before us was like and we knew that life in our family would one day be joyful again, if we stuck to what we had learned before and kept the faith that better times would come to us just as they had before.

In short, we are thankful for many things. We are thankful to Simon Stevens in England, the pastor who helped start TCF in the late '60s and who started to spread it around the world wherever

he went. We are thankful that TCF came to the states in the late '70s.

We are thankful that Rosina just happened to see a remembrance in the newspaper from a father whose daughter had died, and when Rosina called him to see how he had survived, he told her about TCF and its upcoming Worldwide Candle Lighting Ceremony (WCLC). We are thankful for the people we met at the WCLC who invited us to join them in their monthly meetings, and we are thankful for these 'new and best' friends we have ever had who helped us in gaining our lives and perspectives back.

Finally, we are thankful for the people who are like us, and finally find their way to TCF and renew our inspiration in finding a better way of life than we would have, if we didn't have each other. Now then, no one reads this newsletter and this column other than you, but if you didn't recognize who this last group we are thankful for is, it is you. You inspire us, you keep us tuned in to what is important in life and what is not, and you keep us in an environment where we all are better off. So, we have found who and what we are thankful for...it is you who are reading these words. Thank you for being who and what you are. We couldn't have made it without you.

-- Dale Gunnoe

Kirkland WA Eastside

**It's Hard to Live**

Yeah, those of us who are in this boat together know those thoughts, words, feelings. It's hard to live without your child when all you really want to do is lie down and quietly, without fanfare, join your child. We can't do that though. There are too many who care what happens to us and do we really want to put anyone through anything even close to what we are going through? No, I don't think so. In the beginning, it doesn't matter so much. The pain is more than anything we have ever felt before and we just want it to end. It's hard getting past that point, but it can be done.

This is where we learn to be strong. We didn't start out strong as people are so fond of saying to us. We have earned that badge in the deepest, hardest way ... one step at a time, one moment at a time, one day at a time. We fall down so many times, it seems as though we will never get up again. We go along for a short while feeling a little

okay and a truck falls on our head, a sudden reminder, as if we needed one, that our beloved child is gone.

Last Sunday was Tim's 42nd birthday. He has been gone almost 8 years now. I wanted to cry, lock myself in my room and just be alone. That didn't happen as we now have his son with us on his birthday every year. I cannot allow myself to break down where he might see, so I bucked up, pulled up my 'strong', and spent the day with him. It did not make me miss Tim any less or even think of him any less. It did help me get through the day. I had only one wish I could not fulfill and that was to be with my daughter that day. Maybe someday she will feel she can. I know she misses him as much as I do, just in a different way.

We do a lot of things that are hard now. Just getting out of bed is a trip through agony, but we do it. Believe it or not, we are stronger for it. Each time we pull ourselves back up we are a little bit stronger. Our whole lives have changed and we will never be the same, we will never be the person everyone knew. Some will accept us that way, others will walk away. That's okay, they may have become toxic to us anyway. It is hard to let people leave our lives, but what can we do? We are not that person anymore that they so want us to be and they can't understand why we haven't gotten over this sorrow and returned to our old selves.

Sound familiar? I grieved losing myself, the life I knew, the feelings I had. The world became a stranger. Sometimes, it still is. I have no desire to go out into that world. I have many triggers that can set me off into deep sorrow, so I avoid what I think might do that. There will always be something that pulls me down, but I draw on the strength that I had to build as time went by. It's still hard at times to realize that my son is really gone. I try not to play the game of maybe he's in another state, alive and well. That only brings you more pain when the truth jumps up.

Losing him will always be hard. My heart will always be broken. But for him, and for those who love me, I will go on. If you are new to this pain, try to remember that it does change with time, the sharp edges dull a little. You will probably always hurt for them but it will be different. You may feel you are the only one who remembers them, but honestly, that is not so. There will be friends around a campfire telling stories about them or their girlfriends will remember the silly things they use to do. They are remembered in so many

different ways.

Yes, it's hard to live, but learn your strength and use it. Cry when you need to cry and scream and shout and whatever else you need to do. Don't hold back because people might be offended. If they are, they can leave. Don't worry about those that have left your life, it is probably for the better in the long run. Baby yourself, take care of yourself, you have earned that right by love. It's so hard to live, but we will do it anyway, we will survive, we will learn to be strong. Know that you are loved and there are people out there that care.

All my love to all of us who are broken. I wish you all gentle days and nights as you walk your path.

-- Barbara, 'Forever Mom.'

ShareFacebookTwitterPinterest About the Author
My son, Tim, passed on January 5th 2014 at the age of 34. He chose to end his life. So many things happened to bring him to that point. Believe it or not, I understand why.



On The Holidays: I Can't Be Excited

Everyone else is so excited about the holidays. Halloween came and went, Thanksgiving is around the corner, then Christmas and the New Year.

The countdown has begun, but I can't participate.

While they count down the days until another wonderful holiday starts, I begin the countdown to her birthday and the start of another year without her. I can't get excited about the snow, because snow means shoveling my way through a cemetery. I can't get excited about "silent nights" because all my nights have been silent since last December.

I can't get excited about any of this anymore. Last year things were so different, she was alive, and I had hope that this year things would be better. I pictured family photos, sibling pictures with Santa, the first steps, and her first birthday. That all vanished the night she died. My dreams and ideas died too.

I hope that someday I'll be able to be excited about these things again, but not this year.

-- Author Unknown

Newly Bereaved...

The following article is adapted from Please Be Patient, I'm Grieving: How to Care for and Support the Grieving Heart. This book includes what many of us wish we could say to

those around us about what loss is like, what we're going through, and how they can support us through this. If you've ever felt misunderstood or frustrated by others in your grief process, you'll be able to relate...

From the Grieving Heart...

I'm hurting. Something traumatic has occurred. Someone I love is gone, and they're not coming back.

I don't know how to do this. It's like I've been hit by a bus, and I'm lying flat in the middle of the road, watching the sky go by. The world speeds on, oblivious to my loss. I watch but can't seem to enter in. It's as if someone pushed the pause button on my life. My world has suddenly changed, forever.

I'm stunned. I'm hurting. My heart is crushed. Grief can be heavy. And yet, I can't fully accept it somehow. This can't be real.

I know this is confusing for you. It's confusing for me also. You're probably wondering what to say or what to do.

You can come sit beside me in the road, if you want. You don't have to say much. In fact, you don't have to say anything at all. Your presence is worth all the words in the world right now. I probably won't say much either.

Don't expect much out of me. I won't be myself for a while. In fact, I may never be the same again. This is something we'll both have to grapple with, but now isn't the time for that.

Sometimes all I can do is lie here and breathe. I won't be here forever, but it's where I am today. This is hard. It hurts.

I don't know how to begin, so I'll just stumble forward and hope my seemingly random thoughts and emotions will make some kind of sense to you.

Thanks for reading this. I know this is strange. It's weird for me, too. Please be patient with me. I'm grieving.

Loss Hurts

Losing a loved one is painful and traumatic. It can wound the soul and crush the heart. We lose parents, siblings, relatives, friends, co-workers, and even children and grandchildren. We lose people to death, divorce, moves, disasters, or illness. We can lose them in an instant, or we can lose them over time.

Unfortunately, loss is a huge part of life. How we deal with it makes all the difference – both for ourselves and those around us.



Remember...

Your grieving relative or friend is hurting. Their "normal" is gone. The disappearance of someone they love is affecting them deeply.

Change has hit their heart and life. You may not feel or understand it, but their pain is very real. It really feels as if they've been hit by a bus. Life is no longer business as usual for them.

They need people who will be with them through this. Grief is lonely, but no one should have to endure this spot in the road alone.

Helping them may be different than you think. They need people who will hear their heart and meet them where they are. And where they are is different for every person.

They're hurting. They're supposed to be. Acknowledge and respect their pain. They're getting hit over and over again. Venture out and sit beside them in the middle of the road. Your presence can be more comforting than you realize. --Gary Roe

Seasoned Greivers...

And For This I Give Thanks

This will be the fifth holiday season without my daughter Nina here in the physical sense. I find that I am far enough along in my grief to find memories to smile about now, but still close enough to remember those first few years and the piercing stab of pain in my heart that went along with them.

Thanksgiving was one of my favorites; I liked the idea of family and friends gathering together with no other purpose other than stuffing ourselves with scrumptious food until you nearly exploded, and being thankful for each other and the blessings of the past year. No presents required, just the joy of family togetherness - and the knowledge that my children were here...all of them. On that first Thanksgiving the empty chair and place at the table seemed to scream out at me that someone precious was missing. And the message of this particular holiday was thankfulness? What on earth could I ever find to be thankful for?

Some TCF parents have memories of being unable to choke down any morsel of food because they were continually trying to choke back tears that first Thanksgiving. Just wanting to curl up in a ball, pull the covers over their heads, and wake up some time in January after the last remnants of the holidays were cleared away. In all honesty, I

cannot tell you even one detail of that first one: where I spent it, who was present, where I was, or if I cried all day. I am sure the numbness factor of early grief shielded me from the memory of something that was so inconceivable...that my precious daughter was gone...forever.

- Almost five Thanksgiving's later, have I found reasons to be thankful? I asked myself this question and decided to put pen to paper. I was surprised to say the list was quite lengthy, so I will only share a few of them. I am thankful for:
- My memory, because now the painful memories are, more often than not, replaced with the beautiful memories of the past, and they were such beautiful memories.
 - My life, for whom else will keep Nina's memory alive? Of course, my family, but they have lives, as they should. I am the self-appointed keeper of my daughter's memory.
 - Nina. The joy of loving her, the privilege of being her mother. Though I wish it had been much longer, I wouldn't trade those 15 ½ years for anything.
 - Smiling a genuine smile, laughing a hardy laugh, and finding my sense of humor again. I sincerely believe that Nina likes to hear me laugh and that she would want me to find humor in life again.
 - My sight, because I commented— for the first time in five autumns— on the magnificent colors of the autumn foliage and the grandness of Minnesota's most sumptuous season. I didn't think I'd ever notice again. But I did.
 - The Compassionate Friends, who showed me there is life after the death of a child; who allowed me to express my emotions, listened patiently, understood my pain, and welcomed me into their hearts. They helped salvage what remained of my sanity and I will be eternally grateful.
 - The opportunity to give back. To bring hope to the newly bereaved by sharing the knowledge that it won't always hurt this bad, and that you will make it with the love and support of family and your Compassionate Friends. And, that there will come a time that you too will find things to be thankful for again.

I am told, by those who know, that peace is the light we are searching for at the end of the tunnel. Though I find myself still looking for it at times, those further down the grief road have reassured me it will come, maybe not this Thanksgiving or next, but that it will. And I believe them...

--Cathy Seehuetter, TCF Cottage Grove, MN

Looking Forward...

What Worked for Me

I thought that I would never be able to climb out of my despair over the tragic death of my 15-year-old son and then 20 years later the death of my husband. How could I make good out of something so bad? What comes to mind is the emotional upheaval that healing and growth entail.

At the time of both deaths, the feeling of powerlessness was overwhelming. Although I didn't have control over their deaths, I knew I could choose how I was going to survive these losses. I remember making a conscious decision to make the best out of a what seemed to me to be the worst of all times. I also knew that I needed to reach out to other people who had suffered similar losses, and I was fortunate to meet good people who helped me along the way.

By reaching out, I began to look outside of myself in a less narcissistic way. I realized that I didn't have all the answers on sadness and that suffering wasn't only about me. I came to understand what empathy meant. Through sharing my grief and giving of myself, I was able to find the strength and courage I needed to heal.

I learned that I had to do the grief work and feel what I needed to feel and allow myself to be crazy with grief at times, but I also learned that I was strong and capable of making very difficult decisions.

My faith in God became stronger, and I was able to surrender to a higher power and be consoled with knowing that I am not alone when I feel despair. I discovered along the way that when people come into my life, I can see true goodness in others and, in that seeing, I am grateful.

Although I am forever changed after suffering great loss, in some way, this suffering made me actually look at the world with different eyes, realizing that there is not only darkness but also great beauty in people, and this realization is truly a gift and the source of my growth.

--Therese Maasch



Friends And Family...

Should We Have a Credo for Friends?

We are the friends of those who lost their children to death. We want to be part of your grieving by helping you, our friends, through this very difficult time. We do not know what to say and might inadvertently say the wrong thing. We need you to help to tell us when this happens. Most of all, we want you to know that we hurt with you. You are our friends and we feel helpless.

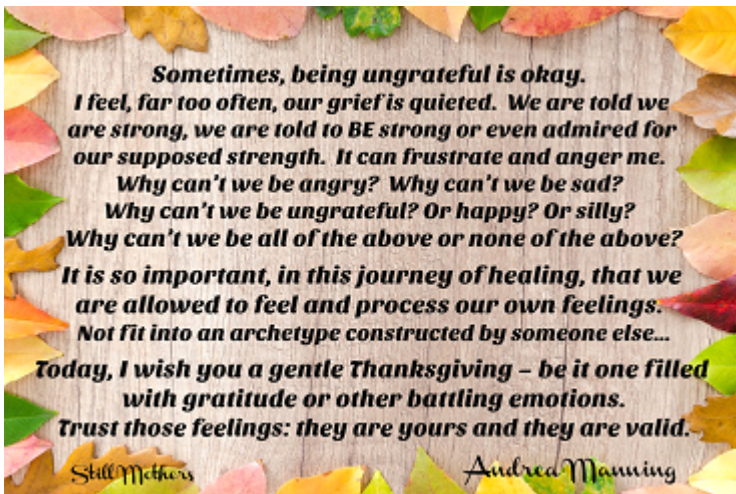
We do not want to force you to hurry with your grieving, but we want you to make us part of it. We do not know your pain and hope that we never will, but we feel your pain because we care for you. We are here to listen, so you may talk to us about your loved one. If we were not privileged to know your child, tell us about your child so we also understand the special person he or she was.

Most of all, trust us, we are here when you need us. We will not ask you to show a happy face when sadness is in your heart. We will not diminish your grief by uttering useless phrases like "God must have wanted your child more than you."

We know that in time we will once again see you smile. But we are willing to wait until you are ready. We are "The Friends of those who Grieve" and we have compassion for your loss.

--Karin Powell, TCF, Volusia/Flagler, FL

Helpful Hint...



Welcome...

As members of The Compassionate Friends, we understand what you are experiencing. Like you,

we have also lost a dearly beloved child. We share your pain, and while every journey through grief is unique, we are here to support you. We welcome you to attend our meetings and see for yourself how helpful they can be.

Book In Review...



Dear Parents: Letters To Bereaved Parents, Centering Corporation. A support group in book form, this collection of letters from bereaved parents with helpful information as they share their experiences.

Thankful

Today I Am Thankful
Today I am thankful for tears
Though an ocean I have cried
They speak of our connection
Reminding me that love has not died
Today I am thankful for the memories
They brighten the road of grief
They remind me of love shared
And provide a small relief
Today I am thankful for love
Felt strongly in my soul
Love continues living forever
Keeping us together and whole
Today I am thankful for friends
Those who didn't walk away
They saw my broken heart
And chose to sit and stay
Today I am thankful for time
For the moments that were too few
Through the tears that are shed
Today I am thankful for you
--Tanya Lord TCF We Need Not Walk Alone
Autumn/Winter 2014

"The weird, weird thing about devastating loss is that life actually goes on. When you're faced with a tragedy, a loss so huge that you have no idea how you can live through it, somehow, the world keeps turning, the seconds keep ticking."
-- James Patterson Angel



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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew "Matty" Louis
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: 4/77 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 Sinclaire
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22
Mother: Suzanne Sinclaire

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.

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

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

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

Ryan Yorty
Born: 4/81 Died: 5/84
Mother: Denise Gonzales

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.

For Siblings...



Why??

I have asked myself that very question over the last few weeks. A friend at work lost her child the week of my brother's anniversary. Even though Sean has been gone for five years, all of those memories came rushing back to me. The pain was once again fresh and new.

I have only attended one young person's funeral since Sean died. My experience at that funeral was awful. I was close to being hysterical through the whole funeral and when it came time to go up to the coffin, I fled the building. I just couldn't look into the eyes of the child's mother and sister and feel that pain all over again. I later apologized to the mother and she understood so well. Now with my friend's child dying, I was beside myself. I didn't know if I could even go to the wake much less the funeral. I had no idea what was about to unfold for me.

My office is a small office, so when we heard about my friend's child dying the impact was felt intensely. My co-workers and I couldn't think or work. We just kept thinking about my friend and her family.

One by one people began asking me what they could do for her. I immediately called my mother and the next day everyone had a pamphlet on knowing how to help a grieving co-worker. Then we began talking about how we were feeling. I let them know some things that they might expect, and that if they thought what they were going to say was stupid then to just say they were sorry. We then made plans to attend the wake.

I was taking things one step at a time. I went to the wake and when my mother and I arrived, car loads of kids were arriving also. I took a deep breath and in we went. I made it to the coffin. My friend had been taken out just before I arrived, so I talked with her sister. When I looked at her

beautiful child all I could think of was 'why'. Why did another young life have to end? Why did another mother have to feel this pain? Why did one more sibling have to feel the way I do? Why did another family have to change forever?

I will probably never know the answers to those questions. I know that when I looked into that brother's eyes, I knew that pain. When I hugged my friend, I remembered that numbness. I realized that I will just have to take my experiences and help anyone I can – the kids that go to my group, a co-worker, a perfect stranger. I just know that I feel a need to show people that life does go on, but in our own time.

--Traci Morlock, Sean's Sister BP/USA, St Louis, MO

"To the outside world we all grow old.

But not to brothers and sisters.

We know each other as we always were.

We know each other's hearts.

We share private family jokes.

We remember family feuds and secrets, family
griefs and joys.

We live outside the touch of time."

--Clara Ortega

This Thanksgiving

This Thanksgiving and always,

Through the grief,

Through the tears,

Through the loneliness,

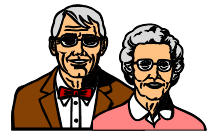
Through the fears,

We are thankful

We had our brothers and sisters.

~ Khaki Chambers, TCF Chapter Pensacola,
Florida

For Grandparents...



The Grief of Grandparents

There is no bond greater than the bond between parent and child. When a child dies, the pain of parental loss is near the top of the scale of human grief, and there is an immediate outpouring of sympathy and concern for the bereaved parents. But other grieving family members, including siblings, are often seen as secondary players who must provide support to the distraught parents. Among these forgotten grievers are the grandparents.

In many families, the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren are every bit as profound as those between parents and their children. The death of a grandchild also ranks high on the scale of human grief – but it is rarely acknowledged. There are few books or support groups addressing the grief of grandparents, and bereavement counselors who specialize in this kind of grief are rare. Grandparents are usually left to cope as best they can.

When a grandchild dies, the anguish of grandparents is doubled. Their grief for a son or daughter suffering this tragic loss only compounds their pain at the loss of a beloved grandchild. Grandparents who outlast a grandchild struggle with a death that seems out of order; they may cope with survival guilt, perhaps wondering why they couldn't have died instead. Moreover, a grandchild's death chips away at a grandparent's assumed legacy. Most of us hope to make a mark in the world, and the achievements of our children and grandchildren are a part of that dream. When one dies prematurely, that loss resonates through the generations, and like the bell in John Donne's poem – "it tolls for thee."

Many families are fractured by divorce, violence or mere inattention, and struggling single parents are hard pressed to provide the consistent and unconditional love that children need. Grandparents fill the role of the enduring presence, the ones who are available and who can be depended upon for affection and support. The deep, nurturing love shared by many children and their grandparents is a bond that is extraordinarily painful when broken by death. It is a grief out-of-sight, but nonetheless powerful.

If you are a grandparent who has lost a grandchild, you have every reason to grieve deeply. Life is complex, and many of our fundamental questions have no apparent answer: Why do such bad things happen? What is the meaning of such pain? For now, your task is to mourn the death of this child and to take care of yourself as best as you can. If you want help, look for a book that addresses parental grief and substitute "grandparent" as you read. Perhaps your local hospice, faith community or mental health center has a support group for grieving grandparents. If not, ask them to start one. There may be other grieving grandparents among your friends and neighbors, and you can share your common grief and mutual comfort.



- Above all, be patient with yourself, and:
- Don't try to suppress your grief. Stoicism won't work.
 - Select the relatives or friends who give you comfort, and tell them how you feel.
 - Don't accept a comparison of your grief to that of others; grief is unique to each person.
 - Take time off from your grief occasionally. Go visit a friend or take a short vacation at a place that you love.
 - The loss of a beloved grandchild is a severe blow, but avoid thinking that life has no more to offer.
 - Some of the world's grandest music and literature were created out of personal tragedy.
 - Find your own expression of your loss and your search for meaning — see if you can create your own requiem.

It is important that you find ways to fill the void in your life. The worlds of literature, music, and art can be sources of great comfort in a time of grief. Think of the great works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven; what comfort they can bring! If you have always wanted to paint, take some classes and dedicate your efforts to the memory of your grandchild. Sign up as a volunteer for a local hospital or food bank. Helping others can strengthen the nurturing identity that has been injured by this death. By putting your pain to work, the good that comes from it can heal.

When a great loss hits us, we are numbed and life seems meaningless for a while. But with the passage of time, we again begin to see that life is still worth living, not just for others but for ourselves, as well. Just as you loved a grandchild, there are others — friends, neighbors, and even strangers — who await your love. For all its cruel twists, this life is still the only one we are given. You have every right to be a survivor and to make the most of each day and each year. I suggest you get started today.

--Helen Fitzgerald, American Hospice Foundation

From Our Members...

Where Is God When I Feel this Lost?

When I lost my beloved 24 year-old son in a tragic accident, I also came close to losing my faith in God. I asked the universe, "How could God allow this to happen?" And "Why did my kind and loving son have to die, when bad people get to live?"

Suddenly life didn't make any sense. My world was upside down and I was lost!

I think most people believe in the existence of God but aren't necessarily affiliated with a particular religion or church. Personally I never completely gave up on my faith and continued attending church every Sunday. After much reflection and prayer I came to realize that God doesn't cause the tragedies in our lives, rather He is there to help us through them. I was finally able to let go of my hurt and anger enough to place my broken heart into His hands. I figured that since the Bible tells us that God heals broken bodies, broken hearts, and broken lives, I would let Him into my brokenness. This is when my true healing began.

My advice is to ask God to help you along your healing journey. Leaning on my faith, support from family, and Compassionate Friends (along with some loving messages and signs that God allowed my son to send me), I was finally able to begin the long path toward healing my ravaged heart. Although my son was no saint, I had no doubt that he was in Jesus' loving arms in Heaven. My consolation was that someday I would see my sweet boy again on the other side of the veil.

I read many books about near-death experiences and hospice workers which gave credence to my belief that there truly is a Heaven where we will be reunited with our child and all loved ones on the Other Side.

--Linda Zelik TCF South Bay/L.A. CA

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: Nov. first for Dec. 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 (chpt. co-leader).(310) 292-5381
 Bonnie Mantyla (chapter co-leader).....(310) 530-8489
 Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096
 Linda Zelik.....(310) 370-1645
 Mary Sankus.....(310) 648-4878
 Nancy Garcia (Spanish speaking).....(310) 406-5163

Local TCF Chapters:

Beach Cities/L.A. (Manhattan Bch): (970) 213-6293
 Third Tue.
 Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.
 Newport Beach (917) 703-3414 3rd Wed.
 Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.
 Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269
 Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206
 Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.
 Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160
 San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.
 South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue
 Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.
 Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

Local Support Groups...

Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com
Alive Alone: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Alivealone.org
Survivors of Suicide: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253
Our House/Bereavement House: Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also Spanish Support Group, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.
Pathways Hospice: Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031
New Hope Grief Support Community: Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075
Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place: Various bereavement support



groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

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

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

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

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

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

Other Grief Support Websites...

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivelaone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	M.A.D.D..org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)	
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)	

A Special Thanks to Staples for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

Chapter Officers:

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS: Leo & Connie Licciardone and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya

CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Mueller

WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

Steering Committee Members:

Linda & Joe Zelik

Marilyn Nemeth

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

I'm sorry to say, no donations were received this month

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 _____

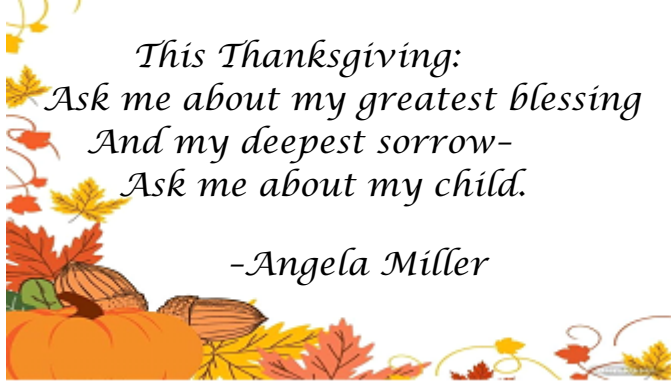
Birth date _____ Death date _____ From _____

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

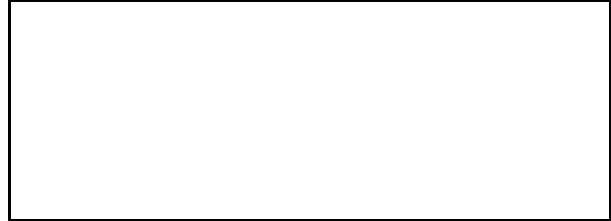
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*This Thanksgiving:
Ask me about my greatest blessing
And my deepest sorrow-
Ask me about my child.*

-Angela Miller

- Return Service Requested -



November 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.

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