



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

January 2025 ISSUE

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

### **OUR NEXT MEETING**

will be January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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. Patio 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 Jan. 2nd meeting will start with **"Making Time/Taking Care in The New Year"**

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

The TCF Meet and Friends group is a place to share with othertakes 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 Thursday Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will start with “Making Time/Taking Care in The New Year”.** As bereaved parents we are changed forever. It is up to us to acknowledge and feel the pain of our loss and then to explore ways to leave the pain behind and cherish and hold on to the love we will forever share...Not a easy task, but one we must conquer. We must find the time needed to focus on ways to take care of ourselves and our families as we start to find a new life for ourselves with a child/children missing. I'm sure many of you will find helpful suggestion in the following articles, but it is a hard journey we face in finding ways to go on after such a huge loss. Attending meetings and sharing with other TCF members is one way to take time for ourselves and make time for healing and taking care of ourselves. As we face the New Year without our child, know that the tiny silvers of hope will grow as we tackle the job of reinvesting in life and that we have only our own timetable to guide us no matter what others may think. Be good to yourself and give yourself the gift to make changes and choices you and your child would be proud of. We hope you will join us at the next meeting as we share ways to diminish the pain and focus on hope for your future.

## Seasons

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again. We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the “black pit” and never have the strength or courage to crawl out – because crawl out we must...on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives – including ourselves, for we are different now. We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must go forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point our world changed. I used to say “ended.”

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again – and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again – or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.  
--Renee Little TCF, Fort Collins, CO



## A New Year Begins

Living life with a heart badly broken By loss is painful. When the broken heart's caused by the death of one's child, grief's an agony hard to endure.

I began this new year without promise or hope, bewildered, bereft and bereaved. I am missing you; you anchored my world in its place, now I struggle through pain, unrelieved. I know life is in constant renewal, death takes to make room for the new... mankind's not exempt from this process, we expect death will come when it's due. If a maker has planned out this scheme... for the parting of parent and child, death has no rational part of this theme.

What's the point? What's the plan? Are there rules? It might help if I knew where I stood. Did I cherish, and love, and nurture my child just to suffer the trauma of losing for good? I know there aren't answers to the questions I pose, I must search for my solace within.

Making peace with the pain and the anger and grief through tears that seem never to end. Living life with a heart badly broken by loss is a life that is empty and sad... And I mourn for the years that are lost to us now, for the future my child never had.

As I face this new year without her sweet smile I yearn for what now cannot be... But her memory lives on through the words that I share of the beauty and joy that was she.

-- Sally Migliaccio, in memory of Tracey, always

## New Year a Time to Search for 'Ray of Hope'

*Be my ray of hope, be my ray of laughter.  
Be my song to sing that guides me on my way.  
Be the arms that hold me.  
Be the love that enfolds me, be my light,  
Be my ray of hope today.*

...Paul Alexander, songwriter

Snowflakes drift silently to earth. A new year has dawned. The revelry of the old year has quieted and the holiday hustle and bustle has ended. As bereaved parents, for many of us, this will be our first full year without our children. For others, the upcoming year will be another thread in the garment of life. A thread connecting the memories of our old life with the hope for “recovery” in our new life.

How often our thoughts wander back to another

day and time when we were happy and full of the vitality that makes up life—a time when our child made our life complete and worth living. Though three years have passed since becoming a bereaved parent, I still think about my children every day of my life. As I sat watching the ball atop Time Square descend, my thoughts jumped back to a time when my children lay safely in their beds as we brought a new year into existence.

Does *this* new year bring with it a time when we will hurt less—when there will be a new ray of hope? Or does it bring even more heartache because of the sadness and loneliness we find difficult to leave behind? The answers lie deep within each of us. How we approach this new year will make the difference.

*Can we be kind to ourselves?* Just because others place demands on us to do whatever they feel will help us does not mean they are right. They have not walked in our shoes. We can say 'NO!'

*Can we enjoy life again?* Though we cannot be physically with our children, they would want us to enjoy living . . . and yes, they would want us to love again!

*Can we help parents who are more newly bereaved to clear the same hurdles that seemed so insurmountable to us such a short while ago?* By reaching out to others and making their burdens a little lighter, we are helping our own open wounds to heal.

*Inside of me are all the answers. Everything I need to know lives inside of me, Come behold my miracle, Come and hear my story. Come and paint a memory with me.*

. . . P. Alexander

--Wayne Loder TCF Lakes Area, MI

*"Ray of Hope" by Paul Alexander on the CD "The Best of Paul" at www.griefsong.com (Paul wrote LIGHT A CANDLE which has been used at many TCF candle lighting programs).* Permission to use excerpts from "Ray of Hope" granted by Paul Alexander.

## Surviving Grief

Everyone expects you to eventually stop grieving at some point...right? They think it can't possibly be healthy to grieve someone you lost for too long. Wrong! You'll grieve the one you lost forever. Why? Because love is forever. So do you know why you'll never get over it? Because 'it' is the one you love.

What you learn to do is live with the grief. The

pain, visible or not, stays with you forever, until you take your last breath. You may wonder how long the grief will last. The truth is that healing comes slowly...but it does come. Nothing can replace the person you lost, and yet gradually you'll find you're able to continue with life, and start to feel happy at times, while remembering the one you love and lost.

Grief comes in waves...and you'll have dark days when it seems as though nothing can ever be right again. But there will also be better days when the pain eases, and it's possible to begin to hope and believe in the future again.

Some people find it easier to show their feelings than others, but nearly everyone finds at some stage that it helps to talk. So talk about your loved one every chance you get. This can be to friends, relatives, or by seeking professional help.

There's no magical invisible wall clock that's ticking pressuring you to get over it. You're allowed to take as much time as you need to heal.

Don't think that you have to get back to 'normal'...that will never happen. The pain you feel when you miss them is never going to go away, but that's okay. You're stronger than you've ever been in your life, and you're capable of doing things that you were never capable of doing before.

Here's the thing.....you don't get over it...you carry it. You'll never get over it, because 'it' is everything you loved about the person who died. It's all the memories and time spent with them.

Just remember that the decision to start the healing process is entirely up to you. So when you're ready...get out there and take a chance on yourself.

-- Gary Sturgis

## Becoming Stronger At The Broken Places

"If I am what I do, and I don't, then I'm not." Those words have been spinning around in my head ever since I heard someone comment on how we tend to define ourselves by what we do rather than by who we are. I thought about those words incessantly, almost to the point where they became nonsensical. But they aren't.

Until April 25, 1978, the day of my son Bryan's death, I'm afraid I was guilty of defining myself by my roles in life; computer marketer, husband, father – and without being really aware of it, mostly

"Hearts are broken, but they are healed. Tears are shed, but they are wiped away. Only love remains. Only love rises again and again to prevail."

~ Jocelyn Soriano  
"Mind My Broken Heart" (Book 1)  
@SHEIN@SHEIN@SHEIN



in that order. I was caught up with “bringing home the bacon”, “making a name for myself”. And the tunnel vision that goes with all of that. My sense of self-worth was wrapped up with those feelings. One of my colleagues used to call me “Rapid Robert” because of my pace in going places – or was it a treadmill? I was a workaholic, and only too often by the time I’d gotten around to family matters, I’d run out of steam.

Then my son Bryan died. The superficiality of my life smashed headlong into a brick wall. For months I felt like I was sitting in the middle of a field scattered with pieces of my life; job pieces askew here, family relationships trailing off there, dreams piled akimbo over here, hopes were asunder over there.

As I listened to my son’s friends at the two remembrances for him, it dawned on me that at nineteen a young man doesn’t have a long list of credits and accomplishments. Bryan hadn’t “made a name for himself”. Bryan was Bryan. No more, no less. His many friends loved him for who he was, not what he was. Strange the lessons fathers learn from sons – to care – to share – to be there.

I wrote these words blinded by pain, and I could sense what it was that brought together people from all over in a common bond of shared grief – Bryan cared about them. I wondered if I were to die suddenly, after more than fifty years of life, how would I be eulogized? “A real professional, a true marketer, a dedicated employee...” I’d settle for two words...”he cared.”

I’ve tried to put the pieces of my life back together again, but I’ve tried to be selective. I’ve left many pieces lying in that field because they don’t fit anymore. And I’ve fashioned new pieces, each in some way inspired by the lessons of Bryan’s life.

Hemingway wrote, “Sooner or later life breaks everyone, but afterwards, some are stronger at the broken places.” I’ve tried to put the pieces of my life back together selectively. As bereaved parents, we have a choice; we can fixate on the death or we can affirm life. I know which my son would have wanted me to do.

--Robert Rosenberger, TCF, Burke, VA

### Just for Today for Bereaved Parents

Just for today I will try to live through the next 24 hours and not expect to get over my child's death,

but instead learn to live with it just one day at a time.

Just for today I will remember my child's life, not his death, and bask in the comfort of all those treasured days and moments we shared.

Just for today I will forgive all the family and friends who didn't help or comfort me the way I needed them to. They truly did not know how.

Just for today I will smile no matter how much I hurt on the inside, so that maybe my heart will soften and I will begin to heal.

Just for today I will reach out to comfort a relative or friend of my child, for they are hurting, too, and perhaps we can comfort each other.

Just for today I will free myself from my self-inflicted burden of guilt, for deep in my heart I know if there was anything in this world I could have done to save my child from death, I would have done it.

Just for today I will honor my child's memory by doing something with another child because I know that would have made my own child proud.

Just for today I will offer my hand in friendship to another bereaved parent, for I do know how they feel.

Just for today when my heart feels like breaking, I will stop and remember that grief is the price we pay for loving, and the only reason I hurt is because I had the privilege of loving so much.

Just for today I will not compare myself with others. I am fortunate to be who I am and have had my child for as long as I did.

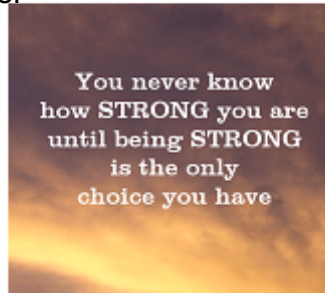
Just for today I will allow myself to be happy, for I know that I am not deserting my child by living on.

Just for today I will accept that I did not die when my child did, my life did go on, and I am the only one who can make that life worthwhile once more.

--By Vickie Tushingam

### How Many Children Do You Have?

How many children do you have? A simple, innocent question, but one a bereaved parent struggles with. If we don't include our children who died when we answer the question, we feel as if we are denying their existence. One mother told me that she cried for hours because she told someone she had no children (her two children had been killed earlier that year). If we do include our deceased children when we answer, somehow we fear the response or discomfort that is felt by the



person hearing the news.

For the bereaved parent, there is really no “right” answer to this question. We must respond the way our heart and the situation dictates. We should not fear how the person we are talking to feels about the truth. We should only be concerned with how we feel at the moment we are telling it. We need to be considerate of our own feelings and, if the situation is such that we do not include our children who have died in the answer, that’s okay, too . . . because we may be at a point in our grief that doing so may be painful.

We are the only ones who need to be pleased with our response!

-- Pat Loder TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI

## I Used To Grow Marigolds

When my son Jordan was a toddler, I came up with a notion that he needed to be able to appreciate where his food came from. So, I removed the sod from a small piece of our backyard – a place that seemed to get the requisite amount of sunshine – and I planted cherry tomatoes. Over the years, this spot grew to include cucumbers, zucchini, and green beans as well as a variety of tomatoes.

I am not a gifted gardener. My grandfather was a farmer and I am sure his city/small town bred granddaughter wouldn’t make him proud. I most definitely do not have a green ‘thumb’. But I did the best I could. I tried various tomato cages over the years to keep the crop from sprawling all over the soil; I tried “raised beds.” And I always planted marigolds around the perimeter.

I can no longer remember why I planted marigolds. It wasn’t to make the garden look prettier. There was some purpose, some objective. Maybe they were supposed to keep bugs away? Birds? Slugs? No matter. I planted marigolds.

I grew tomatoes until Jordan’s final summer. As he got older, his favorite sandwich became a BLT. For weeks at a time in the late summer, I made BLTs for him almost daily. Often two BLTs. His special version of BLTs: no mayo, just a bit of butter and no lettuce. On toast.

He last came home from college for term break in February. I asked him before his break what foods he especially wanted me to prepare when he was home. Among others, he suggested BLTs. And I said, “But, Jordan, tomatoes are terrible in February!” He said, “You’re right, Mom.” So, no



BLT’s. Plenty of other favorites, including the angel food birthday cake with chocolate frosting he preferred. But, no BLTs.

He died in April. I am comforted that I grew tomatoes for him until the last summer of his life; I regret that I did not search for a decent tomato that February when he was at home. The summer after he died, I had our yard man cover up the garden area with sod. I don’t grow marigolds anymore. After six years, I do finally eat BLTs again. With lettuce. And mayo, not butter.

--Peggi Johnson, In Memory of my son Jordan  
TCF Piedmont Chapter, VA

## In Search of Lost Joy

Just as it happened in your life, a single moment changed everything and so here I am with you tonight. My son's death took with him all our hopes and dreams. All of us here know that loss, the emptiness that brings us here in search of something to stop the pain, something to stop the tears, something to dream about again. We came tonight as a TCF family to share with each other, loving each other, protecting each other during the storm. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing right now than living.

That wasn't always true. After my son's death there were days when all I could do was think about dying, to join my son, or just to relieve my pain. Now there is a freshness about each day that I never understood before. I got to where I am today because of time and a commitment to rediscovering the joy of living.

Time does help fade the fabric of our grief. As time stretches us away from the moment of our child's death, we may begin to grow away from our child. And so we cling to that which we know, even though it tears our heart again and again. Is it not possible that one day sometime in the future, we will begin to understand that joy can return as we remember our child's life, not his death?

We once feared we would never be happy again, that only helplessness and darkness would prevail in our lives, but now ten years later, I can share with you the wonderful discovery that we can do more than survive. Survival is not enough: I want to live.

We cannot find words to sooth the hurt; there simply aren't any. We can, however, build supports and safety nets. Recovery from the death of a child is a matter of choice. Time does help heal over open wounds. Scars form and serve as reminders.

Gradually, however, we must learn to live with those scars and, slowly, let them sink in place. Recovery begins to occur when we can learn to reinvest our energies, emotions and love rather than seek to replace it. When we completely understand we did not lose our child, recovery is possible. Our child died, but the love we shared between us can never be destroyed.

I cannot reach out alone. I need the love and strength of my new-found family to be a cheering section and a safety network of caring individuals who will support me if I fail, and who believe strongly enough in me to put me back on track to go on again.

The human spirit has an infinite capacity to survive, endure, and grow. It requires both laughter and tears to thrive and flourish. It requires love and faith, strength and support as well. Hurt and pain have their lessons too, and we cannot rob ourselves of the richness of the tapestry that hurt and love weave together. To eliminate one from the loom is to break the thread and steal away the fabric.

For those of you who are hurting too deeply, whose pain is too fresh, whose child's death is still too close to hear me, I want to give you the message: "HOLD ON, HOLD ON TIGHT." Right now for you, there seems to be little sunshine, little hope and no energy to choose life. So hang on tight.

And if you know parents who are struggling just to hang on, reach out to them right now. Loan them some of your strength, knowing they will loan you some of theirs when you need it. That's what TCF is all about: helping each other through the valley of the shadow, helping each other through the hurt, helping each other through the anger, the pain, the emptiness, the silence, helping each other rediscover life.

-- Darcie D. Sims

## Peace



Today is the one year anniversary of the day my son realized he could no longer live. I know this because he told us so in the writings he left behind. It is not the anniversary of his death.

What I remember of the day is that it was not unlike any other. There were no family fights or friend drama. There were no failed tests or poor academic projects. It was just a day like today.

That week was just like any other as well. Tom

attended high school and college classes, and we worked, going through our days just as we always do. But Tom found a way to spend special time with each of us before he left. He and L.J. spent Monday night playing music together. I tried to record it, but it was not perfect, so I deleted the file that night. Tuesday night he and I made his favorite meal together, pasta with hot sausage red sauce. Then, we played a complicated video game which consisted of me pushing random buttons to fend off the bad guys while he worked his magic on the most powerful villains. We played for a few hours, until my hands hurt and I could not see straight from all of the blurred images on the television. He played the music he loved and told me which was his favorite song. I listened to it through his ears, but cannot remember the song name. That night, he peeked his head in our room, and played with the light switch, turning it on and closing the door behind him with a mischievous grin. He spent the next few days with his father, doing the things they loved to do together, including gaming with a great bunch of folks on Friday night. He spent Saturday and Sunday at our house, doing homework, playing on the computer, and listening to music.

That Sunday, as I cooked in the kitchen and talked casually with him, he wrote his final farewell to us. We had no idea of his pain, his plan, or our future. In his note, he told us that past week had been the happiest he could remember because he was able to live during that time without fear and anxiety of the future. So a part of me is at peace, if that's possible, because he was able to spend his final hours free from his demons. But how I wish, in that week, he had found the strength to fight through the darkness and tell us of his inner war. How I wish I had seen past his armored wall into his soul, so I could pull him through to the light of our love. I wish we could have shown him how many people appreciated him and were impacted by him, and how many would have stood by his side as he fought his undiagnosed illness so he could win his battle with a full army. I wish...

I miss him every hour of every day. I miss his humor, his intelligence, his presence, his thoughtfulness and his soul. Someone recently responded on one of my posts that maybe Tom misses me, too. I hope he is beside me as I write, and can feel the outpouring of whatever is stronger than love, that I have for him. I pray that through his death, he found the peace he could not find in life.

-- Kimberly Starr TCF Facebook Loss to Suicide

## To the Moms and Dads Who Suffer Loss: You Are Not Alone

You are walking the hardest path anyone will ever walk—living this life without your children. Your losses have come in many shapes and sizes. You've lost tiny heartbeats early in the womb. You've screamed and sobbed through labor to deliver a silent but perfect little bundle. You've held a fragile infant for hours, days, weeks, or months, only to give him back to Heaven. You've watched your little one grow into a curious toddler and then held her a final time as disease or an accident took her away. You've lived a full childhood with your baby and even watched him become an adult but now he's gone and the hole in your heart is huge.

Your child is gone and what remains are what ifs and should haves. Guilt and pain are all too familiar to you and your "new normal" changes every day.

Our children are supposed to outlive us. We are supposed to be able to protect them and fix everything, but in reality . . . that's just not always the case.

You are forever a different person. You never have the complete joy you would have had with your baby here. Your marriage is now completely different. Some of you just couldn't recover and your marriage has ended. Some of you are suffering this loss as a single parent. Your relationships all are now vastly different.

The world keeps turning for everyone else while yours is stopped on the day your child died—because a piece of you died, too.

You find that people don't know what to say around you because "I'm sorry" is not enough. People you were close with drift away. Family becomes strained and weird. And countless bits of advice and cliché sayings are thrown at you constantly.

If you have other children, people call you lucky; if you've lost your only child, people tell you to just have another one as if a new baby will replace the one you lost. All of your stories are different but you have one thing in common . . . your hearts are forever changed by your children and by their loss.

Grief changes you. But so does hope. Hope in the good that can come from sharing your stories. Hope that one day, your loss will be redeemed. Hope that you always have a safe place to come with your grief; to a community of people who completely get how you feel.

You are not alone in this ocean of grief even when you feel like you're drowning. You are loved. Your children are loved. We are in this together.  
--www.herviewfromhome.com

## Newly Bereaved...

### When A Child Dies

When the thing that one only imagines - actually happens, you discover very quickly that you have a difficult time speaking about it. People who have lost a child, including myself, act in all kinds of weird ways in order to deny the awful truth - not just because of the awful pain of losing a person they loved - many of us have lost parents, mates and friends, and no matter how painful, it's just not the same. But because what has happened is so unnatural, so against the necessary order of things, that we cannot accept it—it is almost beyond our comprehension that children should die before the adults. It contradicts history, violates basic physics, and so, when we lose a child or children, life seems to lose all meaning. We are changed forever.

--Anne D., TCF, Oklahoma City, OK

## Seasoned Grievers...

### Kintsugi

Some years ago, during a sharing session at our regular monthly meeting, a sad, frustrated, despairing father asked, "Just tell me - when will I feel like myself again?!" The group was silent, just staring at the distraught man, unable to respond, understanding that he really thought there was a time line and that he would someday feel "like himself again". As gently as I could, I told him about a beautiful vase - a vase that shatters and because of its value, is slowly glued back together so that it once again functions as a vase. But the cracks will always be there - the cracks will become part of what the vase is and what its history is. That the vase was worth restoring to be enjoyed again. That, I told him, is what his new self will become.

We are like that vase. We can discard the broken pieces or we can be restored. At TCF we are restored.

Recently, I learned about an ancient Japanese art form called Kintsugi. This is a method of restoring cracked and broken pottery with a medium



mixed with gold. The method enhances the cracks making it part of the design and emphasizing the beauty of the objects and its experience - its history.

Those of us who have been traveling on this path for many years will recognize Kintsugi in our own lives. Our experience has shattered us and seemingly rendered us unusable. But in our desperate attempt to understand what has happened to us - even without being aware - we begin to restore ourselves - with gold. We talk endlessly about our children and our siblings; how they impacted our lives, how we will never be the same without them. Golden conversations. We talk about our memories of them - what we had, what we'll miss. Golden memories. We think constantly about them. Things we shared, times we spent together, plans we had. Golden thoughts.

Now, without them here; we create scholarships, plant gardens, write books, start foundations - pure gold. We reach out to others new to our world and assure them compassionately. We ultimately recognize how much better we are for having had our children in our lives.

That understanding becomes our own Kintsugi - the cracks will always be there, enhanced with gold - our lives, like the vase, richer for the experience of having had our children. Kintsugi. Our lost children become the gold in our lives. Loved while they're here, adored once they're gone. Kintsugi. The cracks in our lives even more visible when tinged with the gold of memory. How rich we are for having had them. I've been in restoration mode for almost 25 years now. While my tears have been reduced to only once or twice a week, my current activities are almost all a result of Peter having lived and been the most meaningful part of my life. My golden boy. The shattered pieces of my life have been glued back together with the golden treasure of the impact he brought to the world and which I continue to nurture in his memory.

Kintsugi. An ancient art form perfectly suited to mend a broken heart.  
-- Marie Levine

## Looking Forward...

"I believe as we regain balance and meaning in our

shattered lives, we can come to see that death can indeed bring a new meaning to life.

This is my prayer for all of us."

--Eleanora Ross



## Friends And Family...

### Don't Think I Do Not Grieve

Don't think I do not feel; because you see no tears. A river rages deep inside of grief, and loss, and fears.

Just because I do not cry now, don't think my heart's not broken. I keep inside the misery of words not to be spoken.

Sometimes I smile, or crack a joke, so you won't see the pain; or notice how my hands will shake, or how I've gone insane.

Each time I chance to think of her, my heart is ripped asunder.

The loss I feel is mine alone, you will not see my thunder.

--Brenda Penepent reprinted from July DC/Northern Virginia Chapters Newsletter

## Book In Review...



***Grieving the Loss of Someone You Love*** by Raymond R. Mitsch & Lynn Brookside. A series of thoughtful daily devotions, that shares wisdom, insight, and comfort and will help you through and beyond your grief. Available on Amazon.com

## Helpful Hint...



### The Sun Will Shine

I sat in the darkness in the living room, for dawn was only just arriving. Through the picture window I watched the trees slowly outline the opposite shore of our little lake. Then magically, a warm shaft of light appeared behind the trees, flooding the horizon with gold. "It will be a beautiful day for our picnic," I thought. But as the daylight grew stronger, I saw that a thick, gray fog blanketed the lake and the lawn between it and the house. "Oh, no," I moaned, "I was so hoping for good weather." Then a ball of fire peeked over the horizon and rose majestically into full view.

Within an hour it had burned off the mist, and the picnic day emerged bright and clear under the cloudless sky. Life is like this, I thought, when grief



darkens our days. It is then we must keep hope burning in our hearts. We must believe that if the sun is not shining at the moment, it will shine again, and we will have a richer appreciation of the bright days for having experienced the darkness.  
--Madeline Robinson TCF Twin Lakes, Wisconsin

## 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.

## January Warmth

Like a tree in winter which has lost its leaves, we look ahead to Spring for new growth and the warmth of the sun to heal the pain in our hearts.

Let us make January a time to reach out to each other and give that warmth from our hearts, and in return, we will all show new growth.

--Pat Dodge, TCF Sacramento Valley, CA

## To My Sister

You touched us all, you loved us all,  
Forever giving, forever caring,  
Forever forgiving.

Never wanting in return.

Blessed are those who shared your life.

Rich are those who carry your memories.

Please rest now; your chores we will finish.

'Til we meet again...

--Cindy Keltz ~ Arlington Heights, IL

## As I Sit In Heaven

I watch you everyday  
I try to let you know with signs  
That I never went away.

I hear you when your laughing  
And watch you as you sleep,  
I even place my arms around you  
To calm you as you weep.

I see you wish the days away  
Begging to have me home,  
So I try to send you signs  
So you know your not alone.



Don't feel guilty because you have  
A life that was denied to me.  
Heaven is truly beautiful  
Just you wait and see.  
So live your life,  
Laugh again,  
Enjoy yourself and be free.  
Then I know with every breath you take,  
YOU'LL BE TAKING ONE FOR ME  
--Author Unknown

## Sending Love From Heaven

I know the rumble of the thunder  
Fills your heart with tears for me  
I see the way that your soul wonders  
All that we were meant to be  
I've come to tell you that in life there  
We are merely passing through  
For we have a home in Heaven  
That our soul already knew  
We come to grow and learn on Earth  
As we live life each day  
And as we grow we Graduate  
For we're not meant to stay  
And at our graduation  
When most people think we're gone  
We're Alive, Perfect, and Vibrant  
As our Souls still carry on  
We take all that we've learned on Earth  
To help each other grow  
Life there is but a blink for me  
For you, Earth time feels slow  
At times you feel me at your side  
And ask me, "Is That You?"  
I whisper softly, "Yes It's Me  
I'm Here In All You Do"  
I'm there for all your milestones  
For your good days and the bad  
I know you wish you had more time  
To share the life we had  
Just know that when you graduate  
That you'll be here with me  
Where we will intertwine our souls  
For all Eternity  
--Fara Gibson thegriefftoolbox

"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



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 Trillegi &  
Edward Dornbach

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

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

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

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 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



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

David Reade  
Born: 4/72 Died: 9/23  
Brother of Bobby Reade

Ronald Reade II  
Born: 9/69 to 8/23  
Brother of Bobby Reade

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

Christian Saylor  
Born: 10/90 Died: 10/24  
Parents: Jeff & Coco  
Saylor

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.

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

Vincent Zuniga  
Born: 1/99 - Died: 10/24  
Parents: Shonnie Allen &  
Eddie Zungia

\* 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...



## When We Lose A Sibling

The loss of a sibling - no matter how old, no matter how close or not, and no matter how often death has occurred to others we know, is like losing part of our own lives and part of ourselves. Who will be left now to remember us as the children we once were? Who will be able to remember our parents the way we do and as only their children can? Who will there be who lived in the same house, tasted the same foods, heard the same stories, were taught the same lessons as we were? We still have our own memories of course, but without someone who shared them and can relive them with us, they become mere ghosts...

When we lose a sibling, we lose not just the particular person or relationship, but perhaps our last remaining link with our past. Our siblings are special people in our lives, i.e. sometimes they are supports and sometimes they are stresses or even strangers to us. But it does not really matter because regardless of whether we like each other, we have intimately shared and shaped each others' past and been shaped by them. So when our siblings age and fail, our own lives are changed too. And when our siblings die, we know there is no one else - no matter how close to us they may be - who can bring back the particular part of our life we have lost.

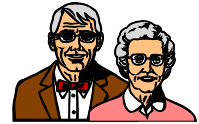
--Lillian Hawthorne Senior World Magazine

## I Am So Sad

I'm so sad, so very, very sad.  
My brother died, died, died  
When I was tiny, tiny, tiny.  
Now I'm older, older, older.  
And he's still my older brother.

-- Leah Kaminsky, TCF/Miami FL

## For Grandparents...



## An Open Letter to Grandparents

Dear Grandparents,  
We grandparents are put into the unenviable double role with the death of a grandchild. Not only do we lose a grandchild, but we find ourselves in the helpless position of watching our children grieve the loss of their child. Several of the challenges with which we are faced as bereaved grandparents include communicating with our children, being a good listener (often very hard for us grandpas), and trying to understand our roles with our children, other family members, and friends as we face being strong for our children yet giving ourselves room for our grieving process.

As grandparents, one of our greatest challenges is asking 'why' did such a tragedy happen to our family. As the family matriarchs and patriarchs, in our minds we are the ones who are supposed to die first. Not our children, and most definitely not our grandchildren. The death of a grandchild goes directly against everything we consider the natural order of our family's life. The natural order is for us as the matriarchs and patriarchs to go first. Yet here we are faced with the reality of a grandchild's death before ours.

If you are asking 'why' or more specifically 'why not me' (as I did), you are a normal and loving grandparent.

As grandparents, we also must deal with what I call the double whammy of grief. All our grandchildren are very special to us. Each one is uniquely blessed to touch us in a way no other child does, not even the other grandchildren. My first whammy was the loss of that grandchild's uniqueness in our heart and our life. My dear BB (our loving nickname for Briellynn Bullard) died within 72 hours of the diagnosis of her cancer. The hole in my life and heart was sudden. BB's uniqueness is gone. That is an emptiness we will never refill. No matter the time it takes, grandma and grandpa, the hole in your heart and life is sudden. Give yourself time to process and grieve in your own way and time.

The second whammy is the grief and helplessness in comforting our children, the parents of our lost grandchild. We as parents have devoted our lives to the comfort and best for our children. Suddenly we are thrust into a position in which we

are very unfamiliar. We are helpless in our ability to comfort our children. Stay involved with your children but give them space to grieve in their own ways. Process their grief as you process your own.

In our position as leaders of the family it is important to remember that all family members will grieve differently. We grieve differently than our children (parents) who grieve differently than any siblings (other grandchildren). Remember there are different ways to grieve. Some will grieve by being quiet while others will keep busy occupying themselves with work or hobbies. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Give your family members space and allow various ways of grief. Always remember there is also no timetable for grief. Some family members will take time, some a very long time. Grief has no timetable.

Grandparents, don't try and push your other family members to adhere to your, or any others, timetable. Grief does not tell time. Grief does not own a clock or calendar. Grief has no timetable for anyone.

I mentioned this earlier to you but feel it is worth mentioning once again before closing my letter. Be careful you don't get so concerned and involved in your children's grieving that you forget your own grief. This can be especially difficult for grandpas. It definitely was for me. We grandpas want to fix things, especially those of you of my generation. Please don't forget, grandma and grandpa, need to also grieve. Pay attention to your grief. Have someone, or somewhere, to go with your pain and grief. You must take care of yourself, or you won't be able to take care of others.

As I close, remember you most definitely are not alone. The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is indeed your friend. At TCF you are amongst friends who understand your grief and your pain. If your surviving grandchildren view you as their 'hip' grandma or grandpa, you are probably a techie.

You can access the TCF Facebook Group/TCF-Loss of a Grandchild to be with other grandparents experiencing the same grief, pain, and issues that come with being a grieving grandparent. I am concluding my letter with our Grandparent's Credo. Read it often and remember, you are not walking alone.

#### *Grandparent's Credo*

*We are the grieving grandparents, shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed*

*of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild. We have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them. When they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. Even though at times we feel powerless to help, we continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.*

Thank you for reading my letter. Your grieving grandparent friend, David Dieterle, Member - TCF Board of Directors

## From Our Members...



### Surviving

There's no way to know,  
in those first, early years,  
if the crying will stop,  
be an ending to tears.  
But slowly, so slowly,  
through the grieving and time,  
will come moments and days,  
when hopefulness shines.  
Backwards and forwards,  
into darkness, then out,  
we begin to start living;  
scraps of new life peek out.  
This happens most surely,  
survivors will tell,  
when we find time for others  
and give of ourselves.

--Genesse Bourdeau Gentry From her book: "Stars in the Deepest Night" -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 [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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: Jan. first for Feb. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 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.



Leo & Connie Licciardone (chpt. leaders).....(310) 292-5381  
 Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (chapter leaders)310)530-8489  
 Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096  
 Linda Zelik.....(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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org)

(310) 483-8313.

### Other Grief Support Websites...

thetearsfoundation.org	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	M.A.D.D..org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
<a href="http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub">www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub</a> (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

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PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Mueller

WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

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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.



### Save The Date...

The 48th National Compassionate Friends Conference will take place in Bellevue Washington from July 11th to 13th,

2025. Latest information on the National website.

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

[www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/find-support/online-communities/online-support)

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### MONDAY

7 AM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

7 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

### TUESDAY

5 PM PST

Loss to Substance Related Causes

6 PM PST

Bereaved More than Three Years

6 PM PST

Bereaved Less than Three Years

### WEDNESDAY

6 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

### THURSDAY

5 PM PST

No Surviving Children 0

6 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

6 PM PST

Grieved Siblings

### FRIDAY

7 AM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

5 PM PST

Pregnancy/Infant Loss

6 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

### SATURDAY

6 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings

### SUNDAY

5 PM PST

Suicide Loss

6 PM PST

Parents/Grandparents/Siblings



**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 all our children. You are forever loved and will be missed forever....  
TCF South Bay/ L.A. chapter

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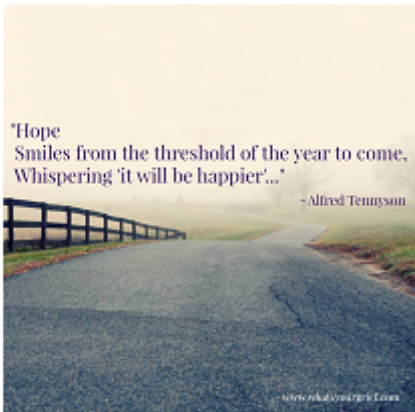
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends  
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter  
P.O. Box 11171  
Torrance, CA 90510

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**January 2025**

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## **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.