



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

February 2025 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING

**will be February 6th, 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 Feb 6th meeting will start with **"Different Ways We Grieve"**

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

The TCF Friday Lunch Group offers you a drop-in- place to talk about your grief on your lunch hour. This month we will meet at Chili's Restaurant: 21835 Hawthorn Bl, Torrance at 1 pm, (Walmart parking lot). 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 Feb 6th meeting will start with “**Different Ways We Grieve.**” As newly bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents our hearts break as we start the grieving process. But, we will notice how we all grieve differently given the circumstances, cultures, personalities and types of death. It is a very personal and complicated process to feel so much pain and confusion all at once. Compassionate Friends we are here to offer insights into what may help, and to reassure you that you are not “Going Crazy” and that you can survive. While we all grieve differently and on different time frames, the lines blur as we share common sorrows. We hope the following articles will touch on some of the commonalities that may be ahead of you in your loss.

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night



It was nine years ago that two police officers came to our door with news that no parent expects or wants to hear. “We are sorry to inform you that your son was killed by a suspected drunk driver tonight.”

SHOCK~ My first reaction was disbelief. How could Marc be dead? He has his whole life ahead of him. He was driving a friend home and I was waiting up for him. No, this can't be! But it was the harsh reality that I could not fathom at that moment that caused me to slip into the nice protective overcoat named “SHOCK.” Thank goodness for the ‘shock’ factor because that is what allowed me to make the necessary arrangements for the days that were to follow.

ANGER~ From the minute I was told that Marc had died I was angry with God. I talked, screamed and wrote in my journal about being so mad that God did not protect us under His umbrella that I thought was in place for our family. No, I do not believe that **God planned** for Marc to die at age nineteen or even that it was **God's will**. It has taken me years to understand that we, all of us have ‘free will’ and one 42-year-old man used his ‘free will’ to drink and drive that fateful night that killed our son within one mile of our home.

BARGAINING~The funeral was held here and a week later we drove home to Topeka, Kansas, where we had a Memorial Service for friends and family. We drove back to Georgia arriving late one night after the 14-hour drive. I unpacked a few things in the kitchen while my husband was

upstairs taking a shower. When I had finished I tried to climb the stairs, but I froze and then fell grasping at the carpet on the stairs sobbing loudly in the entryway. I cried out to God asking, “Why didn't He take me instead?” I told him he could make the change right here, right now and no one would ever know the difference.

PAIN~As the shock began to wear off, I felt the intense excruciating pain. It was so deep and cut like a knife. I thought that the pain was going to kill me it hurt so bad. It felt like someone had ripped my heart out. I felt gutted and empty inside. I was surprised to learn that grief is not just about feeling sad. When you experience grief, there is a **real** physical pain and mine was in my chest that hurt for many months every waking moment. I remember I wanted to die. More importantly I wanted to be with Marc.

TEARS~ I did not know there were so many different ways to cry or different sounds one could make while crying. I would be sitting in my chair and begin to cry and invariably I would end up on the floor, face down in the carpet crying my eyes out. At other times, I rocked back and forth sobbing so hard and speaking gibberish that even I could not understand what I was saying. Our older son told me that I even cried in my sleep because he had heard me one night.

DEPRESSION~ I kept the drapes drawn that first year and withdrew from the world. I was like a frightened animal huddled in a corner. My first thought upon waking each morning was that Marc was dead. I would curl up in a fetal position and cry. I had trouble concentrating, remembering things and making decisions. My mind would wander constantly. I had no energy—none—zip! I remember being so proud of myself the time that I completed mopping my kitchen floor that had taken me three days to do.

RECONCILIATION~ I am nine years into my grief journey. For me, it has been about ‘leaning into my pain’ and stumbling around in the dark searching and trying different ways to cope since the death of our son, Marc. I read grief books, I journal, I attend bereavement seminars, I visit the cemetery and most importantly, I cry.

“**DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT**”—but stand toe to toe with the beast called grief! Do not be afraid of your thoughts, feelings, and pain. They are **ALL** normal reactions to the death of your dear child. Instead I ask you to wrestle grief down to the ground, screaming, kicking and crying until you have made grief your

equal and more manageable.

I heard a speaker say, "we did not expect to outlive our child, but we can make a choice as to whether we will become bitter or better with the time we have left." Let's begin to take control of our life, picking up the pieces and make the choice to be a better person. If not for ourselves, let's do it for our children.

-- Susan Van Vleck TCF Marietta Chapter, GA

Any Child's Death Diminishes Me



What difference does it make whether a child is stillborn or dies after some years of life? She spoke of lack of memories because her child was stillborn. He commented on the deep pain brought by those very memories which remind him of what he lost. When it comes to a child's death, does the type of death matter? Is a murder worse than an accident? Suicide worse than chronic illness? Teenage worse than older adult? Stillborn worse than teenage?

I've tried to be thankful that Jeanie wasn't murdered, that she and those dear boys did not linger comatose, or die from prolonged illness. I could not find thankfulness, though I have sought diligently for it within my deepest being. The death of each child, whatever the age or circumstances, brings its own guilt and anger, its own despair and questioning. Any child's death diminishes the parents who love that child, and for those bereaved parents, that death is surely the worst, their grief the most severe.

--Robert F. Gloor Tuscaloosa, AL

Changing Perspectives

All things change...even in the lives of those families who have not been altered as much as our lives have. Mistakes are made, things are said, accidents happen, seemingly monumental events take place, 'catastrophes' occur, and life goes on. So it is with us, as well...as much as we wish some parts of our lives could be frozen as they were forever. However, we cannot alter the course of events that brought us to where we are today, even though we may desperately wish we had the ability to roll back time or do things differently. The only thing we have 'control' over is our perspective... how we view things...and sometimes we question whether we even have that ability. But we do.

However, it is not a power granted us to effect instantaneously or overnight. It takes time and conditions must be right.

And whether we actively will ourselves to change our perspective on the many facets that affect our lives, or not, change does occur. It is just a natural innate progression with which we are programmed and we can either welcome the change or we can fight against it with all our might, only to be defeated in the end. We may rail against the death of a loved one and struggle to keep the relationship intact as much as it was, but we cannot. Change in perspective, however, will take place and everything will be kept 'relational' to accommodate the change that has occurred to other changes as they take place.

In other words, the natural order in our lives is for things to change and as those changes occur, the relationship of all of our life's aspects change, as well. We are not allowed to just declare that one aspect of our life will stay the same while others cannot. Is there anyone among us who can say with all honesty that the relationship they have with their spouse stayed the same after they had children? We all know it did not. So why would one think we could keep one relationship 'frozen' in time because of a death? The death has occurred and that cannot be changed. Therefore, the relationship must change.

But what we can do is change the perspective regarding the relationship. We can remember it as it was, but we must accept it as something in the past...while still recognizing that we have the ability to keep the love alive. Because it is that love that is "relational". Love gave it the special quality the relationship had. And it is the love that lives on. We may lose the person, but we don't have to lose the love.

-- Dale Gunnoe, Eastside TCF Kirkland WA

Still

I can't say I loved you. I just can't
Because it makes it sound as if my love is past tense.
Gone, finished, ended.
And that is so far from the truth.
My love is not in the past.
It will never be gone.
I love you now. Still.
You didn't take all this love away with you.
It stays. It lingers.
Some days it jumps up and hits me in the face just

to remind me that it is still here.
 Still persevering.
 Some days it nudges me.
 Challenges me to keep going.
 Daring me to find the strength to get through the day.
 But mostly, it just resonates inside of me with everything I do.
 With every step forward and every glance back.
 Every close of my eyes. Every breath.
 My love is not dependent on you being here.
 There is nowhere far enough, and nothing permanent enough to stop me from loving you.
 So I will not say I loved you.
 Because I love you. Still.
 --by Becky Hemsley

Thankful

January 26th, 2010, the day after the death of our daughter. My husband and I awoke, and the first thing we did was cry. We were still in shock and could not believe she was gone - Forever. Nicole died from lupus. She was diagnosed at the age of 13 and died at the age of 28. We were told when she was diagnosed that she had a good chance to live a normal life, but at the same time lupus in young children was rare. There was not enough information to know exactly what her life might become as an adult.

Today, lupus continues to be considered as rare in children. The treatments have changed, but no one really knows, in the long run, what the life of a child with lupus will be like.

Nicole's 15 year battle was not easy. Her lupus required her to take multiple trips to Seattle Children's Hospital, requiring many overnight stays for chemo treatment. She also came close to death twice as a teenager from lupus. She hated being sick, but who wouldn't? Lupus is a terrible disease that I wish on no one. It is a disease that attacks the body: joints, the heart, kidneys, liver, and even the brain. She struggled physically and mentally, and I worried what would become of my baby? Who will care for her after we are gone? What will her quality of life be?

As a young adult, Nicole's lupus caused her kidneys to shut down. Her kidney loss required her to be on dialysis, 3-4 times a week, 4 hours each visit. When it snowed, I worried, big time. Snow meant the roads would make it impossible for her to get to dialysis, forcing her to take medications to help her body to function even though toxins were building up in her blood. With dialysis taking up so

much of her time, she could not have a decent job and would end up depending on the government to support her, which meant she would live in poverty.

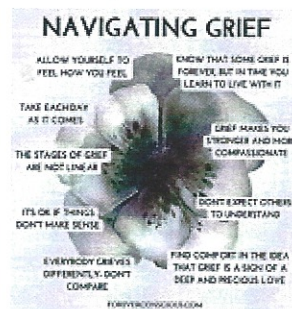
I believe in God and that God is good. But in this situation, I could not see God present. Life was grim, and things felt hopeless.

When Nicole died, my faith turned into anger. I read every possible book on grief and death that I could get my hands on. I wanted to find an answer to why children die. What is the reason? Why did my child have to die? I was positive there were answers to be found. In the end, I found none. What I found were endings to other people's stories that expressed forms of gratitude and hope for the future. I thought, these people are crazy! How could there be anything good to be found in a story like theirs, or mine?

Slowly, my anger began to settle and I slowly started to understand some of the good that I had read about. I started to feel relief and started to be thankful. It may seem crazy, but I am thankful that my beautiful daughter is no longer here as she was. Her suffering is over. She will never have to live with a dialysis machine hooked to her arm. She will never be labeled as crazy from lupus. She will never have to receive any more chemos. She will never live in poverty. I no longer have to worry about her.

Does my thankfulness end my grief? Of course not. Never. I will always miss my daughter. I continue to think of her every single day: morning, noon, night, and more. But I know we will be together again and I look forward to it. As much as I hate this platitude, I feel confident in saying, "She is in a better place." She no longer lives with fear or pain. She is at peace. For these reasons, I am Thankful.

-- Lynn Chun TCF Kirkland, WA



Growth

Acceptance of life and death allows us to grow in wisdom and appreciation of the richness and beauty of life. This spring explore this aspect of growth after a loss. Growth may not be

something we think about when we are grieving, but it happens just as naturally as the beauty of spring when we are open to it. The experience of loss will change our lives, but there can be positive aspects of change that fill our lives with meaningful experiences and opportunities.

--Jill Bellacicco

Puppy Love

I treasure the Valentines that Carson, my only child, made during his elementary school career. There's not many, and they reflect the interest level of a boy who was never into coloring, cutting, and gluing.

The nicest one, framed in a red heart accented with a lace doily, was not to his mom, rather a poem written in honor of his dog, Rusty. In Carson's 6th grade auto-biography, Rusty was featured in the chapter titled: "The Best Day of My Life!" From a young boy's perspective, the best day of his life was the day he brought home Rusty, his first puppy. It was love at first sight for those two.

On Valentine's Day, exactly two months after Carson's death, my husband and I received Valentines from Rusty the Wonder Dog. Without the other knowing, we bought cards to give each other from Carson's loyal companion. I have to admit, I even dipped Rusty's paw in some mud, then signed the card with an authentic "signature." Some might call it silly, maybe downright crazy, but in our own ways we ensure that love and tradition carries on.

--Gloria Jordan TCF Minneapolis, MN

Blessings Inside Sorrow

There are blessings inside sorrow, or so I have been told. I am not sure I always agree. At times I can see the gifts I have been given. Love...without measure...fills my heart when I think of you. But I loved you then too, when you were in my arms, not in my heart. And I miss you now. The emptiness you left can never be filled, not by any blessings I might receive from sorrow.

And yet, still, I wonder. Are there blessings? Would I have known how much I cared for you...for your brothers, for your Dad, were it not for your coming, and so suddenly, softly, leaving, without a good-bye? Would I treasure the life I have remaining if it weren't for your loss? Certainly I loved and treasured you before you left, but hasn't my sorrow caused me to express that love and to treasure more highly those around me? I KNOW I can't take for granted they will always be.

In the aftermath of losing you, when life lay crumbled around me... still was there not a glimmer of hope? That life would go on, somehow, we would survive and build on the ashes of our broken

hearts. Building somehow in spite of your pain. Mixing the cement of our love with tears, we bound ourselves together even more tightly than ever before. And our love grows stronger. And we have not forgotten. What a bitter lesson!

And still, the emptiness will never be filled. There yet remains a hole in my heart...and in all our hearts. Dear son, we will never forget you. The blessings inside our sorrow will never fill the hole you left in the fabric of our lives. It remains open, a testament that you mattered, and that your coming and soft going made a difference. And in that difference lies the blessing inside our sorrow.

We were blessed to have had you for a time, even though you could not stay. And even through our tears, we smile at the memories. And we know that you are not completely alone. You shadow our lives, affecting them in big ways and small. And though I would trade blessings in a minute just to have you back in my arms, I am indeed grateful for the blessings inside sorrow.

--Lisa Sculley TCF, Jacksonville, Orange Park



The Hardest Moments After Losing a Child

Within the first three months following the death of my newborn daughter, I participated in one baby shower, attended two first birthday parties, had multiple infants in and around my home, and watched not one, not two, but five of my closest friends take happy, healthy babies home from the hospital. And in the midst of my own life-altering experience, I purchased, wrapped, and mailed a gift to every one of those new babies, because they deserved one.

In the days and months after my daughter died, I didn't run away or hide from babies at all. And this seemed to confuse most people around me. By the questions I was asked and the looks of surprise when I held another baby, it was clear everyone expected me to avoid other children since I lost my own. Multiple people expressed the same sentiment. They told me "it must be so hard seeing other babies and hearing about other pregnancies."

But for me it wasn't. Because the truth is, holding another baby brought me great comfort. It gave me an opportunity to feel again what it felt like to hold my daughter. To remember how natural it was to talk to her in a silly high-pitched voice. How sweet it was to look into her eyes. Being around

other babies, holding children, hearing about pregnancies—for me those weren't the hardest moments.

It was literally every other moment that felt the hardest. It was walking up the stairs at the end of each night that felt hard, because I was walking empty-handed when I should have been carrying my baby. It was hard getting in and out of my car, because I'd glance into the back and see no car seat. It was the quiet moments between my husband and me at dinner. Quiet moments that should rarely exist with a newborn in the house.

An afternoon nap, or a weekend spent binging on bad TV brought immense sadness and guilt. New moms shouldn't have endless free time for self-care and relaxation. They should be caring for a child. My daughter should have filled those afternoons with feedings, and diaper changes, and long walks, and sleepless days.

It was hard going back to Target, not because I'd hear babies crying or see countless mothers pushing strollers, but because I no longer had a reason to walk through the baby section. I never ran out of my supply of diapers, and my daughter wasn't alive to outgrow her clothes. It was hard emptying a dishwasher with no bottles to put away, and stocking a fridge with no baby food.

So truth be told, seeing a pregnant woman or holding a baby or hearing about a friend who delivered a healthy baby wasn't the hardest thing for me after losing my child. Those moments didn't catch me off guard, or suddenly "remind me" that my daughter was not here, because that was never something I forgot. Her life, and the fact that my life continued without her was something I thought about in and between everything I did. And those moments were the hardest. The hundreds of little moments that made up every hour that filled every day. Because that is how often I think about my daughter. It is constant. It is every moment, and every moment is hard.

--Whitney Guerrero Share

Newly Bereaved...

It's Okay to Grieve

It's Okay to Grieve... The death of a child is a reluctant and drastic amputation, without anesthesia. The pain cannot be described, and no scale can measure the loss. We despise the truth that the death cannot be reversed and, somehow,



our dear one returned. Such hurt! It's okay to grieve.

It's Okay to Cry... Tears release the flood of sorrow, of missing and of love. Tears relieve the brute force of hurting, enabling us to level off and continue our cruise along the stream of life. It's okay to cry.

It's Okay to Heal... We do not need to prove we love our child. As the months pass, we are slowly able to move around with less outward grieving each day. We need not feel guilty, for this is not an indication that we love less. It does mean that, although we don't like it, we are learning to accept death. It's a healthy sign of healing. It's okay to heal.

It's Okay to Laugh... Laughter is not a sign of less grief. Laughter is not a sign of less love. It's a sign that many of our thoughts and memories are happy ones. It's a sign that we know our dear one would have us laugh. It's okay to laugh.

-- Patricia Lufty Nevitt TCF Austin, TX

Seasoned Grievors...

Helpful Insights To Self-Care In Grief

I have just passed the 26th year of missing my son, Adam. He was a pilot and died while giving a lesson to a student. He had an engine problem and could not survive when they landed. Adam was only 23 and married just three short months. He was the kind of kid that everyone loved the moment they met him. I would like to share some insights that I have learned over the past years and hope there is something that helps you on your grief journey.

First, I learned that I wasn't crazy when I couldn't remember the smallest things that first year, and beyond. I called it "cotton brain." What helped me was to start writing in a journal. When sleep wouldn't come, I would write to Adam. I poured out my heart about how much I missed him, how angry I was that the plane failed to perform to keep him safe. I told him about my day, all the insignificant things that I would have told him if he were sitting next to me. And most of all, I told him over and over that I loved him and missed him.

Another thing was to acknowledge my grief, give myself grace to grieve my huge loss. I could not worry about what others thought if I showed my sorrow. I had to let go of the "advice" I received from others. I also found that some of my friends

were not able to handle being around someone so sad, so they left. I needed to find new friends that "got it." The Compassionate Friends was a particularly valuable resource.

A friend that had a couple of years into grieving the death of her daughter gave us invaluable advice. She told me, "You can't lean on a broken fence when you and Mark (my husband) are broken." That is when we began looking for a grief counselor to help us navigate through our grief rather than expect help from each other. I highly recommend doing the same. It is a huge relief to be able to share anything in your heart with someone and not be judged, but instead just be listened to. Not everyone finds the one that will work for them right away. I think that if the first one does not work out, keep looking until you find one that does, like trying on a pair of shoes! You rarely find the right ones that fit with the first pair you try on.

Soon I realized how important it was to take care of myself, not only mentally but physically too. In those first months I could have cared less about my well-being. But I knew from resources that I read that if I did not, I could become a statistic that affects so many because of the impaired immune system. Illness can be one, also accidents increase causing some nasty physical consequences, sometimes for a lifetime. Did you know that when we experience a death of a loved one, it is a brain injury? Because of this, we do not think rationally when it comes to taking care of ourselves; however, our traumatized brain needs us to. Going for a walk is a great stress reliever or take some "me" time to just sit outside and listen to the birds. It can give a much-needed break for your mind and body. And sometimes we just need to have a good cry. It releases the tension that builds up.

Another significant help is to laugh. It is natural to feel like we should not because we are somehow not missing our kids if we do, but it is not at all the truth. Nothing could make us miss them any less. Try tuning in to a classic Carol Burnett show. It's so good for the soul to laugh even for a moment. I learned I needed laughter as much as feeling the grief of missing Adam to have healthy healing.

And my final insight and the most important one for me was to not only look at my loss, but also count the blessings that our beautiful children left us. The most wonderful way to honor them is to go on living. To say their names and to share our

stories. If we do that, we could be helping another hurting heart because we "get it." I look back at those first entries in my journal and see how far I have come and know that although I did not believe I would survive, I did! I miss my son and always will, but I have found joy in life again. I can talk about Adam now and smile at the precious memories that we shared.

-- *Linda Triplett* Linda and her husband Mark live in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. They have a daughter, two grandchildren, and a great grandson. Her son, Adam, died in 1997 in an airplane accident at the age of 23. Her heart's passion has been to help other moms and dads grieving the death of a child by sharing her journey. She was able to do that through her book, "Healing Reflections for a Grieving Mom's Heart" Reprinted from *The Compassionate Friends website*

Looking Forward...

So what you saw in others is what you will see in yourself in time. We are the 'you' in the future and what we have now, you will have. But you should not judge yourself by establishing a schedule for your recovery and holding your progress up to the standard you have developed.

There is no standard...and there can be no timetable. For we are all different despite the one awful similarity that marks us as a member of a certain group with the highest of dues. Progress and healing comes, but at the timetable that develops as time marches on. Each day is different and, therefore, our healing is different. We will never be 'fully healed', but we will be able to cope with the grief we carry and as time passes, it will give us pleasure to recall the pleasant memories of better days as opposed to the pain it may currently cause.

So I urge you first time attendees to invest in us...just as others invested in us when we were where you are now. Let us help you...like others who were in the grief process before us, helped us in those difficult times. Come to our monthly meetings and become one of us.

For those who come back year after year to the Candle Lighting, it was good to see you again (if you weren't just tuning us in on your computer). Seeing you makes us recall where we were in our grieving process and helps us to see how far we have come. We recall the stories you told us and we remember the child who disappeared from your everyday life. And, in a way, we have part ownership in the legacy of your child and we are



comforted to know that others have the same interest in our child and that our loss is felt by others. That is the true beauty of sharing something which we never thought we could ever talk about: others know the real 'us' and they know how much we have lost...while we also know how much they have lost. So we thank you for coming back and, if we don't see you before then, we hope to see you at the next remembrance ceremony where our paths will cross. And, most of all, we thank you for the gift beyond price you have given us.

-- Dale Gunnoe, Eastside TCF

Friends And Family...

The Pit of Grief

The day my child died, I fell into the pit of grief. My friends watched me struggle through daily life, waiting for the person I once was to arise from the pit, not realizing she is gone forever. The pit is full of darkness, heartache, and despair; it paralyzes your thoughts, movements and ability to think. The pit leaves you forever changed, unable to surface the person you once were.

Some of my pre-grief friends gather around the top of the pit, waiting for the old me to appear before their eyes, not understanding what's taking me so long to emerge. After all...in their eyes, I've been in the pit for quite some time. Yet, in my eyes, it seems as if I fell in only yesterday.

Not all of my pre-grief friends gathered at the top of the pit. Some are helping me with the climb out of the darkness. They climb side by side with me from time to time, but mostly, they climb ahead of me, waiting patiently at each plateau. Even with these friends I sometimes wonder if they are also waiting for the pre-grief me to magically appear before their eyes.

Then there are the casual acquaintances (or maybe even family members), you know, the ones who say, "Hi, how are you?" when they really don't care or really don't want to know. These people are the people who sighed in relief that it was my child who died and not theirs. You know, the "better you, not me" attitude.

My post-grief friends are the ones who climb with me, side by side, inch by inch, out of the pit of grief. They have no way of comparing the pit climber to the pre-grief person I once was. You see, they started at the bottom of the pit with me.



They are able to reassure me when I need strength. They have no expectations, no memories, and no recollections of how I "should" be. They want me to heal, to smile more often and find joy in life. But they've also accepted the person I've become: the "Person" who is emerging from the pit.

-- Cindy Early, From the "old" web page MISS (Mothers in Sympathy and Support) from the newsletter of The Compassionate Friends, Seattle-King County, WA, July 2001

Book In Review...



Suicide of a Child for parents whose child died by suicide by Adina Wroblewski. Goes into details about victimization, social stigma, guilt, anger, history and recovery. The main thing for you to remember is You are Not to blame for the death of your child. The decision for death has to belong to your child, not you.



Helpful Hint...

A Word About Approval

A word about approval might be appropriate here. We are a society that lives by approval. Others must approve of our actions, or behavior and sometimes even our thoughts. If we don't meet the approval of society, we are cast out. Even we turn that lack of approval inside and say to ourselves: "If I don't conform, I must be different or wrong." If we are concerned with meeting another's approval, we surrender our individuality—our real selves.

If we are to grow from the experience of losing our child, if we are to successfully resolve our grief, we must stop looking to others for approval of what we do. We must have personal confidence that how we handle our grief is good and right. Since we are working toward our recovery, we must do it our way. Just as no one can live our life, no one can live our grief, and no one can tell us how to grieve. See yourself as knowing what is best for you. Don't let others take that right from you by succumbing to their disapproval

-- Margaret Gerner, TCF, St. Louis, MO.

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.

Living With a Broken Heart

I spend some time each day wondering
How different my life might be.
Why so many people that I love
Are no longer here with me.
Mothers, Fathers, a sister, then our son
Wonderful friends, beloved pets, always another
one.
I know where there is love, there will also be pain.
The sadness will continue until we're together
again.
When the phone rang that particular morning,
I was sure it was a call from Heaven.
The ashes of my best friend, Gabby, were ready.
It was Valentine's Day. (The time was 11:11.)
The loss of each one has left its mark.
Their legacy is what they gave to those they left
below.
"It's not what you take when you leave this world,
It's what you leave behind when you go."
How many more breaths will I be allowed to take
Before it's my time to leave this world?
How many breaks can one heart take
Before it doesn't beat any more?
-- Tom Murphy In memory of my son, Brennan
Murphy TCF Greater Cincinnati, East Chapter, OH

Valentine Wishes

I thought I heard your laugh today,
While watching children run and play.
You chuckled in that special way,
and then you were gone.
I thought I saw your gentle face,
that look which time cannot erase.
Then it was gone without a trace,
and then I was alone.
I thought I heard your voice today.
And suddenly my world was gay.
I thought I heard you softly say,
"I Love you, Mom,
Happy Valentine's Day."
Oh, how I wish...
-- TCF North Hollywood, CA



In the Beginning

In the beginning we hurt so bad
We can't think straight.
Our days and nights run together,
As we cry out for relief
From the pain that has
Seemed to swallow us whole.
That pain now accompanies us everywhere.
There is no place to hide.
It has taken over our life.
It knows our name.
It knows where we live.
It knows that our loved one has died
And so do we
Sort of but not really.
We are still looking for them
To walk in the door,
To say our name,
To reach over and give us a hug.
With every day that passes
Our longing for them grows.
We do not want to believe that
They died and are not coming back.
That reality chases us relentlessly,
Until one day their empty chair
Speaks louder than our denial,
And the wall begins to break
Where we have hidden our heart.
-- Deb Kosmer TCF, Portland, OR

Holding by Hands and Heart

A mother holds her dear child's hands
But quickly time that hold will sever,
She holds a place within her heart
That will endure through time, forever.
Within her arms she hugs her child
Until the child will hug no more.
But in her heart remains a place
Just for that child, forevermore.
-- Sascha Wagner

Those We Hold Most Dear Never Truly Leave Us

They live on in--
The kindness they showed,
The comfort they shared,
The love they brought into our lives.
-- Isabel Norton, San Antonio, TX



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 Albarez

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

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

Cheiann 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 DiMarico

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	Bishop Michael Hernandez Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21 Father: John Hernandez	Douglas Drennen Kay Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06 Parents: Diane & Steve Kay	Kevin Le Nguyen Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14 Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen
Robert Justin Fields Born: 1/00 Died: 1/22 Parents: Loree & Bob Fields	Jesse Hernandez Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22 Mother: Joann Hernandez	Kathryn Anne Kelly Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91 Parents: Dick & Timmy Kelly	Joseph Licciardone Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16 Parents: Connie & Leo Licciardone
Shawn Eric Fillion Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21 Mother: Lise Fillion	Jennifer Nicole Hower Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04 Brother: Jeff Hower	Chase King Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19 Mother: Laura King	Gaby Lindeman Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12 Parents: Gilberto & Graciela Rodriguez
Michella Leanne Matasso Fincannon Born: 8/86 Died: 1/06 Parents: Bill & Cheryl Matasso	Rachel Suzanne Hoyt Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95 Sister: Laura Hoyt D'anna	Colby Joshua Koenig Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10 Parents: Cindy Tobis & John Koenig	Joshua Lozon Born: 6/91 Died: 6/21 Mother: Tracey Gentile
Bryce Patrick Fisher Born: 10/86 Died: 8/21 Mother: Nancy Goodson	Sarah Jade Hurley Born: 6/97 Died: 5/17 Father: Tim Hurley Grandmother: Laurie Hurley	Scott Koller Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15 Mother: Betty Benson	Richard Lee Luthe Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98 Parents: Jeff & Lorraine Luthe
Miles Andrew Gallas Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21 Mother: Denise Gallas	Taylor X. Hyland Born: 8/06 Died: 7/20 Mother: Tessa Hyland	Keith Konopasek Born: 1/63 Died: 7/95 Parents: Ken & Mary Konopasek	Shauna Jean Malone Born: 8/70 Died: 1/13 Parents: Tom & Mary Malone
Mark Scott Galper Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97 Mother: Sheri Waldstein	Steven Ishikawa Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17 Mother: Miki Ishikawa	Margareta Sol Kubitz Born: 9/05 Died: 9/09 Parents: Maria & Bill Kubitz	Elizabeth Mann Born: 7/60 Died: 5/05 Parents: David & Olivia Mann
Lexie Rose Gilpin Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09 Mother: Michele Gilpin	Alexander John Jacobs Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19 Mother: Diane Jacobs	Michael Kroppman Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12 Parents: Brenda & Greg Kroppman	Janet Sue Mann Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10 Mother: Nancy Mann
Steven Paul Giuliano Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95 Mother: Eleanor Giuliano	Stefanie Jacobs Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97 Father: Rob Jacobs	Cherese Mari Lauhere Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96 Parents: Larry & Chris Lauhere	Alex J. Mantyla Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08 Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla
Marc David Guerrevia Born: 7/97 Died: 7/17 Mother: Sharon Cortez	Jason Christopher Jenkins Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20 Parents: Alvin & Caprice Jenkins	Bryan Yutaka Lee Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07 Mother: Kathee Lee	Jesse Robert Martinez Born: 1/89 Died: 9/21 Father: Harry Martinez
Leslie Geraci Hart Born 6/66 Died: 7/11 Father: John Geraci	Lizzie Jester Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18 Father: Lee Jester	Steven J. Lee Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06 Mother: Donna Lee	Travis Frederick Marton Born: 10/91 Died: 1/15 Mother: Ricki Marton
Adam Guymon Born: 4/89 Died: 4/06 Mother: Eileen Guymon	Emily Matilda Kass Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06 Mother: Susan Kass	Emma Nicole Lerner Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06 Mother: Nancy Lerner	Matthew "Matty" Louis Matich Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18 Parents: Mike & Shirley Matich, Grandmother: Dorothy Matich
Christie Hagenburger Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17 Father: D.W. Hagenburger	Jillian Nicole Katnic Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18 Mother: Debbie Hughes		



- 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 this month.

For Siblings...



(Today I Met) The Boy I'm Gonna Marry

I always knew that someday I would get married. I knew my future spouse was out there...I just didn't know where. The last place I ever thought I would meet him was at a sibling grief support group two weeks before a global pandemic and global shutdown, BUT life is weird.

Our brothers, Christopher (my brother) and Matt (his brother) both eerily died unexpectedly in Novembers when they were 32 years old (mine in 2013 and his in 2019). We both found ourselves sitting in a church basement in Manhattan trying to make sense of these deaths of our beloved brothers when we struck up a grief friendship. People who (unfortunately) get your grief become instantly bonded on the mere fact that you both lost a loved one and don't know what to do with all your sadness, but at least you can be sad together.

Shortly after we met at one of the last in-person meetings before Covid-19 shut down the world, Our chapter leader Jordon, moved these vital meetings onto Zoom in March 2020. They were a lifeline to help keep us as sane as possible while dealing with sibling grief and the isolation of staying home. (I am [spoiler alert: was...more on that later] a single mom to a 2 1/2 year old and being home with only him for 2 months straight was a lot.)

I knew there was something special about Matt's brother and not just because his name was also Chris like my brother and son (in fact he and my son have the same first AND SAME MIDDLE NAME!). Chris and I eventually wanted to meet and talk through Zoom more than just in the sibling group capacity and started Facetiming each other for hours and hours on end daily during lockdown. This made us so incredibly close. We laughed,

cried, shared stories of our brothers, and ultimately began falling in love with each other. (As Chris likes to say, our entire courtship took place over Zoom!).

Once lockdown restrictions were lifted, we started seeing each other in person and then started officially exclusively dating at the end of October 2020. In October 2021, we got engaged to be married. My child affectionately calls him "Daddy" (see: no longer a single mom!) We often struggle with the fact that we met the loves of our lives because our brothers died, but within each other we found hope and love so strong.

Christopher and Matt, we love you. Wish you could be here to celebrate with us, but we will honor you within the love we found in each other.

-- Kimberly A. Meyer (soon to be Behan!)
TCF, Manhattan, NY



For Grandparents...

Grandparents' Grief: A Multi-layered Blow

When a grandchild dies, grandparents experience a dual sorrow. They cry for their lost grandchild and they also cry for the terrible grief they see their own child having to bear. This pain is something you cannot take away. This can be difficult to accept because as a parent you expect (and desperately want) to be able to take away your child's pain.

A grandparent's grief is like a fork in the road, going in two different directions. One road represents the loss of your grandchild and the other represents the pain of seeing your child suffer. Therefore, you have two tasks. The first is to work through your own grief and the other is to feel helpful to your bereaved child. There may be two parts, but you actually deal with them at the same time.

'You grieve for your grandchild, you grieve for your adult child and you grieve for yourself. You may feel a loss or challenge to your own identity: at a time of life where there is an expectation of 'settling' into a grandparent role, suddenly you are faced with the inimitable task of being a parent wanting to support and protect your grieving adult child as the whole family navigates this upheaval that impacts all generations'.

The one thing that would help your child feel better – to have their child back – is impossible. It is natural for you to feel useless, ineffective and

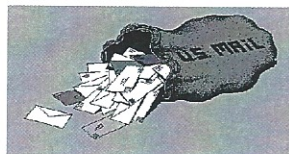
hopeless.

As a mother and grandmother, there is nothing worse than watching your daughter carrying a casket containing a child that she grew inside of her. I was aware she had no strength to complete the task, and, as she stumbled repeatedly. I knew there was nothing, absolutely nothing, that could be done to help her pain.

-- Mother of Marion and grandmother of Steve II, Marion & Steve's stillborn son.

Marilyn's twin grandchild, conceived by IVF, died at 36 weeks gestation. She speaks of the simultaneous experience of grieving the death of one child while celebrating the birth of another and how the mixed emotions were overwhelming and confusing. With the whole family in acute grief, Marilyn recounted: "I couldn't do anything. I felt useless and helpless. I didn't know how to comfort my daughter and felt I couldn't say what she wanted or needed. My heart was breaking because I couldn't do anything. I'd go home and cry. I couldn't stop her crying and I was crying. I realized I needed support too. I was lost. I was going in a daze, then I was connected to the SIDS and Kids Support group and we all shared that the hardest part was not being able to help our children and feeling useless."

From Our Members...



The Fallen Goose

When you see geese heading south for the winter, you might wonder, as I have, why they fly in a vee formation. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates lift for its own flight but it also creates an updraft that benefits the birds that follow it closely at an angle. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and it quickly gets back into formation.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the formation and another, more rested goose, flies up front. By flying in vee formations the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range, than if each bird flew on its own.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are trying to go more quickly and easily than when they try to travel the journey alone. Very much like the vee formations of geese, people can benefit from the uplifting energy of others. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with

those who are headed in the same direction as ourselves.

We can learn even more by studying flying geese. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Also, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

Support and encouragement is a principle upon which the Compassionate Friends stands. If we have the sense of a goose, we can more easily recognize the potential benefits of collaboration and integrated efforts. Over the last year, I have felt much like the fallen goose. It is because of you, TCF members who were willing to break formation and come down with me and offer me encouragement and support that I was able to deal with the difficult ordeal I have been through. I am proud that you are all my friends. I would never have been able to make it without you. Thanks is such a small word, but I don't know what else I can say. Thanks for being there and for caring.
-- Connie Buchanan ~ TCF, Medford, OR

Conference Memories...

My First National Conference

It was a hot, sultry day as we pulled out of the driveway that July afternoon. I had wanted an earlier start, but my apprehension slowed me down. I had managed to come up with excuse after excuse to keep from leaving—knowing that getting in the car and heading toward Chicago meant an admission that I truly was one of the many who had experienced the unthinkable.

More delays—more excuses—more time wasted. I walked down the concrete driveway to the mailbox, not expecting to find much. But there it was, a letter from Dana, a fellow bereaved traveler with whom I was exchanging letters. "See you soon," she had written. "Can't wait to meet you in person and give you a hug!" That letter gave me the courage I needed. It convinced me that attending an annual conference of The Compassionate Friends really was the right thing to do. So my husband, Wayne, and I settled in the car and started on what was to be a most memorable

journey.

There was a lot of silence as we drove the miles. I know Wayne and I were both thinking the same thing. What in the world were we doing?? And why in the world would we want to head to a conference where all the people had experienced the death of a child? Shouldn't we be going to someplace happy, someplace where we could try to forget, at least momentarily, the pain. I certainly didn't want to go to a big pity party where everyone sat around reminding me what I had lost. I lived that everyday.

I knew that other people from my chapter would be there, but somehow attending a national conference of TCF seemed like a huge leap from our monthly meetings, and I just wasn't sure I was ready.

The drive seemed to take less time than I expected—or perhaps than I wanted it to. Finally we arrived at the downtown Chicago hotel that was to be our home for the next several days. I felt awkward and strange. But then an enormous sense of relief surfaced when I spotted Dana's name on her badge. We hugged and cried and hugged some more.

The next morning was the opening ceremony. Upon walking into the ballroom where it was held, my breath was taken away by the sight of rows upon rows of chairs and a giant rainbow of hearts on a 40-foot high canvas. I learned that the Wisconsin TCF chapters had spent many days constructing that special rainbow from more than 5,000 hearts...hearts, which came from bereaved TCF family members around the country. The sharing, the workshops, the compassion, and the concern were unmatched by anything I had ever experienced. It was a time for new friends, old memories, and healing tears. Never in my life had I felt more love, caring, and concern from people whom I had never met before. We shared a special synergy—something that comes along only once in a lifetime. It was as though I was wrapped in a warm, wonderful cocoon.

The kindness and compassion shown me that weekend gave me hope that I could have a good life again. I spent every free moment talking with my new friends, sharing, and—yes—laughing. The warmth I experienced convinced me I had made the right decision to come. I didn't want that conference to ever end.

When I'm asked if bereaved families should really muster up the energy, the courage, the

fortitude to attend a national conference, I answer without hesitation, "yes!" Giving the conference a chance to work the magic of healing helped me beyond measure. It truly is a place where you realize that TCF's motto is true: "We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends!"
-- Pat Loder (Former) Executive Director

Save The Date... The 48th National Compassionate Friends Conference will take place in Bellevue WA from July 11th to 13th, 2025. More information coming soon.

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: Feb. first for March 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 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 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
goodgriefresources.com
bereavedparentsusa.org
healingafterloss.org
survivorsosuicide.com
taps.org (military death)
save.org (suicide/depression)
pomc.com (families of murder victims)
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

childloss.com
griefwatch.dom
opentohope.com
webhealing.com
alivealone.org
angelmoms.com
M.A.D.D..org



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

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.

**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 honor and in remembrance of you child, please consider a donation to our chapter.

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 _____

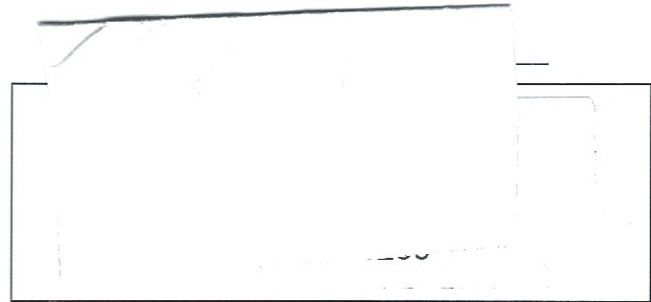
We are always working a month in advance...To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, other wise it will appear in the following issue.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.
We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,
just as your hope becomes my hope.
We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.
We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief
so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.
Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,
while some of us are struggling to find answers.
Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,
while others radiate an inner peace.
But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other
our love for the children who have died.
We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love
to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith
as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

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