



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

May 2025 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING

will be May 1st, 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 May 1st meeting will start with "Where Are You In Your Grief?"

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 every Friday at 1. In May we will meet at The Olive Garden, 23442 Hawthorne Bl. Torrance. We invite you to join us. 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 May 1st** meeting will start with **"Where Are You in Your Grief?"** My child died last month and I just can't believe she's gone...It's been 9 months and I think I am going crazy.... It's been a year and a half and my heart is catching up with what my mind already knows 'It IS real'... I can't believe my baby has been dead longer than he was alive... Five years, can it really be five years since I've seen my child?... I can't believe what I have learned about myself and my grief...

No matter where you are in your grief we hope the following articles will help you move forward and offer you some hope. As you have heard before, "We all grieve differently" "There is no right way...only 'your way' to grieve the loss of a child."

As I gathered articles for this month's topic I remembered how I was feeling at different times in my own grief. Reflecting on the past lets me appreciate that the pain of fresh grief is very different as you gain the tools to mourn your loss and we all change because of the process and the way we accept our "New Normal". Join us as we share our journeys through our individual pain and start to see a new path ahead of us.

We Get By With A Little Help from Our Friends...

I realize that the title of this essay, modified from an old Beatle's tune, definitely dates me, but it really says it all. When I was much younger, a few years after this song was popular in the late 60's, and feathering my nest, I used to religiously read, "Hints from Heloise". She was the lady who would give you all kinds of helpful advice on how to maintain your household; like the best way to get a spot out of the carpeting, or get crayon off the wall or gum out of your child's hair, etc. I believed that she had the answers that would establish me as "Susie Homemaker". Of course, that was back in the days when it was of paramount importance that my house was the cleanest one on the block, where I lived in mortal fear that someone would drop over and find it less than perfect and whatever would they think of me??? Now it sounds so shallow and insignificant to the point of embarrassment. But that was before my daughter Nina died, and the tidy little world I lived in came crashing down around me and ceased to exist.

Once I started to thaw out from the shock and

disbelief, it sunk in that I was truly and sadly a bereaved parent, that there was no going back, and no magic words that would whisk me away from this horrific nightmare I was now living. I wondered where were the helpful hints on how to survive being a bereaved parent. Where was the Heloise of Bereavement who was going to have some answers for me? I wanted step-by-step guidelines on how to help myself and reassurances that I wasn't losing my mind. I needed someone or something to give me permission to grieve for my daughter in whatever way felt right for me.

I would like to share an abridged version of a handful of hints that I and other TCF members I have met on this journey over the years have used to get through the day the best we can:

- 1) If you can possibly do so, get an answering machine or voicemail. Just because the phone rings doesn't mean you have to answer it. There are so many times when you just don't have the energy to even talk on the phone. Most often people are calling to tell you they care and are thinking about you, which you need to hear, so let them leave you a message, and when you feel able then you can give them a call back if you want.
- 2) Have a supply of Kleenex always handy, in every room in the house, in the car, and, for the ladies, in their purses (also a helpful aside for the ladies, two words to remember, an absolute necessity: Waterproof Mascara!). I was lucky enough to have a bereaved parent friend who knew that I had a knack for forgetting to put Kleenex in my purse so she would carry an extra purse-size packet for me too. You just never know when a grief storm will hit and it's good to be prepared. And if you can find them, preferably get ones with Aloe in them.
- 3) If you want to go to the cemetery multiple times a day, or you like to take a lawn chair and a book and sit at your child's grave site for quiet reflection, go right ahead. Some people will discourage you from this and tell you that it is unnatural and unhealthy to do this. I was five minutes away from the cemetery and in my early grief if the need hit me I could and would go out there whenever I wanted, and that may have been one time or five times in a day, even at midnight. Gradually, without consciously realizing it, my need to be at the cemetery daily became less and less as time went on. I stopped thinking of Nina as being there and more about my belief that wherever I was she was there also.



4) Do whatever you need to do (short of harming yourself or anyone else, of course!) to get through the especially tough times; whether it is the major holidays just around the corner, the first day of school, the change of seasons, or seeing your child's friend graduate/get married/become a parent, or any of the other milestones in life that you weren't privileged to see them accomplish. The best helpful hint here is to do what feels right for you. That can mean that you decide 5 minutes beforehand whether you want to go to an event/celebration or not, and then change your mind again if you need to. And if you find yourself at that event/celebration, feel free to sit close to an exit door or have an escape route so that if you feel you just can't stay then you can leave quickly and quietly. You don't need to explain or make excuses; you have every right in the world to feel how you feel, and do what is best for you. You are truly the only person who knows what that is.

The Compassionate Friends, and attending the meetings where I listened to others with a similar loss became a lifeline for me. Here is where I learned about the "new normal" and found people who could relate to my grief experiences. These same wonderful people told me that I could talk about Nina all I wanted no matter others reactions. They told me that I never had to "let go" of her memory and that they too bristled at the word "closure" just as I did. Realizing that support groups aren't for everyone, staying in touch through the newsletter and other grief resources gives you another valuable connection.

Like the above "helpful hints for the bereaved", I have learned so many things from those I have met from TCF since the unthinkable tragedy of May 11, 1995. Nothing "little" about it, I am eternally grateful for the "...help from my friends."

--Cathy L. Seehuetter TCF St. Paul, MN

Always Yesterday

I wrote this in 2000... seven years into my bereavement.

Just seven years after Peter left this world I had already learned so many of the lessons I needed in order to achieve the coping skills that survival required. Re-reading it now, I am still amazed at what I thought in the beginning... that those who had been grieving for just a few years more than me were so far beyond the grief I was feeling.

Loved you yesterday,

 love you *still*
Always have,
 always *will*

Now, so many decades later, I am reassured every day, that Peter is ever present. Not a day goes by that I don't think of him, miss him, long for him and love him. He is always on my mind.

The first time I walked in to a Compassionate Friends meeting, I had been a bereaved parent for 4 weeks. Some of the people who greeted me had been at it for two or three years. I remember one person who had been bereaved for 5 years and I think now about some of the thoughts that went through my mind then. That someone who was two years ahead of me was so beyond feeling what I was feeling...why, I thought, they're practically over it. Three years was further along than I could possibly imagine and 5 years...well, 5 years. What were they doing there?

A few days ago I spoke to a friend who I met during those first weeks. Her brother had died 3 years earlier and she was so broken hearted for me then. We bonded as bereaved people do and our friendship has flourished. The other day, she was tenderly commiserating with me as we contemplated the upcoming 7th anniversary of Peter's death and the 10th anniversary of her brother's. And what we realized as we spoke is that though we've come a long way, there is no time frame after the death of a child...or a sibling. In our world, it's always yesterday.

I've been in survival mode now for 7 years. I've learned a lot. I've learned some of the coping skills I need to live my life. I've learned to live with Peter as a more present aspect of my life than he might have been if he lived thousands of miles away. He is in my consciousness every minute. I've learned that no matter what the experts say about being a bereaved parent... no one has figured out how to describe the reality of our world. I've also learned how important it is to try. And I've learned that I will continue to learn how to go on. That I have no more answers about my life now than I did when Peter was alive. But I do have more questions.

I think about that first year a lot. I remember;

- waking up every day to discover the nightmare was real, sobbing uncontrollably at the reality,
- feeling a genuine hollow emptiness just below my heart,
- moving in slow motion,
- the "why's", "what if's" and "if only's",
- the torment of feeling he was going through the same struggle on the other side,
- forgetting to breathe...then suddenly gasping for

air,

- becoming lost in thought and discovering almost a whole day had gone by,
- feeling like the world was out of sync, like a movie slightly off its soundtrack,
- wondering, wondering how I could possibly survive and not even wanting to,
- feeling singularly punished by fate,
- wanting to feel “better” but not wanting to let go of the intensity of my pain,
- seeing any eventual healing as a betrayal of my singular love for Peter,
- fearing that people would judge my behavior as a reflection of how much I hurt or didn’t hurt.

knowing how much I always hurt,

- angry at all the platitudes directed at me – “Time heals...”, “He’s in a better place...”, “You need to get on with your life...”, and my favorite; “You’re so unbelievable. If it were me, I would die!” How was that supposed to make me feel? Did it mean they loved their children more? That their pain would be great enough to kill? That mine wasn’t enough? Truth is, that’s what I always thought when I heard about someone else. And that’s the big revelation. We don’t die. We go on, forced to learn a whole new way to cope with a totally new, unimaginable life.

I remember vividly my physical discomfort that first year. Uncomfortable in my own skin, desperate for some magical, impossible comfort, a release from my torment. Even while I feared losing that same pain. And I remember my anger – anger at the event, anger at my victimization, anger at those who tried to comfort me...anger at those who didn’t. Surviving those first few years are as surprising as the event itself. It amazes me to this day that we continue to live our lives. Indeed, we even make plans! Today, Peter is still on my mind every minute. But every minute is not filled with unmitigated pain and disbelief. That only happens sometimes. Most of the time I think of him with a smile, remembering what a wonder he was. I speak of him all the time, determined that he remain a part of this life. And now I know what every bereaved parent before me knew and what all those who will come after will learn. That there is no way we ever forget. That we’ll never “get better” or “get over it”. That Always Yesterday... our children are with us every minute. That not a holiday, birthday, or anniversary goes by without noting their absence. That every day we wonder what they would be doing now. That no matter

how far we travel on this journey, when we think of our children, it seems like just yesterday.

--Marie Levine, August 2000

The Harvest Of Your Grief Work

“It isn’t right! I go a month sometimes and don’t cry. I actually get involved in something and don’t think about my daughter for hours. I had fun at the company picnic last week.” “I feel so guilty. Am I forgetting my daughter?”

This mother was two years into her grief. She was doing good grief work— leaning into the pain, talking out feelings, expressing emotions and attending Bereaved Parent’s meetings regularly. But she was hurting less.

When parents begin to reap the harvest of their grief work well done, they fear they are losing their children. The truth is they are just reaping the harvest of their grief work done well.

In the first couple of years, pain ties us to our children. During that time we equate pain with love. By the time we are beginning to resolve our grief (and that is what is happening), pain has been our companion for so long we feel lost without it. This is one of the few places in grief where our mind needs to take over for awhile. We need to look at the illogic of prolonged grieving. We need to see that we are beginning to reach the goal we hoped some day to reach.

Self talk can help us rid ourselves of this illogical emotion. Ask yourself: If you believe to keep your child in your heart for the rest of your life, you must hang onto the pain. Will your prolonged misery make your child less dead? Does the fact that your child is dead mean that you must die also? Does your prolonged misery accomplish anything? What purpose does it serve? Will hanging onto your pain make you grow and change, or will it make you unhappy and bitter? What effect will your prolonged grief have on your marriage and/or surviving children? Do you really want to stay in the pit indefinitely? Will your continuing grief honor your child?

These questions can help you see that beginning grief resolution is as healthy and normal after a couple of years, as allowing yourself to enter fully into your grief in the early months after your child has died. Rethink your reactions. Let yourself get to the other side of your grief. Let



yourself appreciate the peace and comfort that is beginning to be yours. Most importantly, let yourself feel the joy of remembering your child without the deep searing pain you have felt for so long.

--Margaret Gerner, Bereaved Mother St. Louis, MO

When Will I Heal?

I often get asked after a parent has lost a child, "When will I heal from this unspeakable loss?" I knew I would never heal completely, but I searched for reasons to move on with my life until I found answers. No one has the same experience, not all people heal the same way or at the same time. You need to be patient with yourself and give yourself time to grieve, no matter how long it takes.

You may feel better one day and the next feel worse. You may begin to go through the five steps of grief (shock, anger, withdrawal, acceptance and renewal) and find yourself making progress and then retreating backwards to the beginning. It may upset you, but know that it is normal for this to happen. For example, after getting over the initial shock and anger, you get to the withdrawal stage, and then find that one day you fall back to the beginning stage. It is like climbing a mountain, getting to a certain point and then your foot slips on a rock and you fall down to the starting area.

But, what you would do then, you also do in grief. You start again up the mountain and try to reach the top. Just because you start again still doesn't mean you will get to our goal, but don't stop trying. When you reach a level where you can look back and say to yourself, "I've made it past that original starting point," keep going. It is not uncommon to fall into the crevice many times and your emotions may get the better of you then. It all looks insurmountable, but I can tell you that you will survive.

One day a subtle shift occurs when you wake up. It is a beautiful morning, birds are singing, the sun is shining in the window and your spirits may soar. You know it will be a good day and you go from there. This process is slow. It can take you three months, six months, even a year or two. But, time will be your friend and you will find that eventually you will feel a little better. This doesn't mean you are healed. You will never heal from the loss of a child, nor will you ever forget the child who brightened your life so much. You don't want to forget, and why should you? People may say to

you, "It's been a year. You need to get over this. Forget about what happened." They don't understand; they have probably never had a loss this great.

Your feelings may be hurt, but you need to tell them that you are doing the best you can and that even though it is a very bumpy road, you are slowly progressing and improving. Your memories of your child will keep you going, and it is okay to carry those memories with you for the rest of your life. For myself, not a day goes by that I don't think of my daughter.

When I am driving somewhere on a beautiful day, I occasionally have to pull over to the side of the road because my grief overwhelms me. It has been twenty-one years, and I still get teary-eyed thinking of her and all the things she is missing and I am missing by not being together. When I calm down, I continue on. You, too, will have overwhelming feelings at times, probably for the rest of your life. It is something we learn to live with and accept, for nothing will bring them back. I do know, though, she is in my heart now, and I will keep her there forever.

-- Sandy Fox

Sandy has been a member of Alive Alone since her daughter died and is a regular presenter at national bereavement conferences. Marcy Jeanne Lewis, Sandy's daughter, lived for 27 ½ years and died in 1994 due to an auto accident.

Bereaved Parent's Day

Dear Reader,

I hope you will accept this message I want to share. This year, I am offering myself and all of you a special greeting card.

It should arrive sometime in the Spring. It is sent with love and compassion, solidarity and sadness, and acceptance of what was, and steadfastness in honoring what always will be. It should arrive special delivery, and will be labeled confidential and personal, sensitive material, not appropriate for the general population. I hope it will bring comfort and support.

This greeting card is designed for Bereaved Parents during this highly emotionally charged period between Mother's Day and Father's Day. It is a decidedly non-commercial, non-cheery missive dedicated to a group, often isolated and invisible, at



no time so strikingly outcast as during this interval when it seems the whole American and media marketplace is obsessed with a public celebration of parenthood. The cards, the flowers, the department store advertisements describing perfect presents for smiling moms and proud dads from loving (and of course, living) offspring make this month long shoperama more like a painful, money-making marathon than a silly, shallow, Hallmark moment.

I fear an unpleasant tone may be seeping into my message, which is definitely not my goal. Still, even as the years pass, and the truth that our children are no longer physically part of our existence necessarily integrates into our consciousness, we never truly become comfortable with that incomprehensible reality.

I know that on the surface, time moves on with its rhythm and busyness, but on a deeper level, there is always the awareness that I lost my child. I try to practice an attitude of gratitude for the gift of my wonderful son's life, cut short well before his journey on this earth should have ended. But, admittedly, at times, my inner feelings of being cheated, unjustly treated and defeated by life, manifests. This negativity can reveal itself in gallows humor satirizing the superficial complaints of clueless (regular) people, unresolved guilt (even though I do not have control over death), a sense of being viewed as a pariah or object of pity example, when I answer the innocuous query, "How many children do you have?", the permanent status of grief as part of my psychic makeup.

In an effort to endure this difficult season, I've decided to give myself and all my compassionate friends a BP (bereaved parents) card. No sentimental images, specious verse, cutesy musical ditties, or inspirational messages to be included. No price tag listed on the bottom of the back page. No postage stamp necessary. Just an affirmation that we sill are mothers and fathers; that our children will always be with us in spirit; that our sons and daughters are loved and missed; that their lives mattered; that their memories are a blessing; that they continue to enrich and ennoble our lives every single day of the year. They bequeath to each of us, uniquely and distinctively, their Mother's Day and Father's Day wishes, in a profound, mystical and transcendent way.

BP cards are for our hearts only. They are our silent, inexplicable and inalienable legacy.

-- Nora Yood



Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, Mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past ... gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the fifth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my dad would say.

Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued. The choice to embrace or ignore Mother's Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow." Some of us weep; some of us work. Some of us read, some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our own truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I

refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But, on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.
-- Annette Mennen Baldwin

What are healthy ways to cope with a loved one's suicide?

Let it out, but don't dwell on it. As mentioned, it is completely normal to experience feelings of grief. Whether you feel like shouting, crying, or hugging your pillow tight, let it all out. Let yourself feel. Losing someone is truly painful, and it is important not to bottle up these emotions.

During the early stages of losing someone over suicide, it is normal to often find yourself crying or feeling tingles of pain. Allow yourself to be vulnerable during this period. This may temporarily interfere with your daily life, but it shouldn't be disruptive to the point that your grief turns into a long-term preoccupation. Lay down your burdens, but make sure to pick up yourself afterwards.

Talk to trusted friends and family.

It may be tempting to lock yourself in your room and keep your thoughts to yourself. Talking to someone may be the last thing in your mind. However, keeping in touch is one of the most effective ways to heal, and can even be therapeutic for you.

You can open up about your thoughts and feelings about the suicide to trusted friends and family. Make sure to find people who are empathic and can truly listen. It is normal to keep on rehashing past events especially during the early stages of loss, so find someone you can vent your feelings with.

Prepare yourself for painful reminders.

After a loss, it is almost inevitable to experience daily reminders about your loved one. A picture, a certain smell, a nostalgic place, and even your loved one's clothes can suddenly trigger feelings of pain. Be prepared that you will experience this

once in a while, even years after your journey to recovery.

Instead of feeling grief, you can turn these reminders as a celebration of their life. Associate these small reminders to beautiful memories about your loved one. Even as you experience memory triggers, there's sure to be much joy to be remembered about that special person in your life.

Seek professional help.

If you feel like you need more intervention than self-coping strategies, it is best to seek professional help. You can find counselors or faith based treatment centers who are ready to help you on your road to recovery.

The most common hurdle that prevents people from seeking professional help is the social stigma that comes with it. It is important to remember that stigmas are just baseless perceptions that shouldn't even matter--what matters more is your health and wellness.

Give time to heal.

Everybody has their own pace to recover from a loss. This is a time to be kind to yourself as healing is always a process. There may be days where you feel great, and other days you will feel just okay. On bad days, you may find yourself in anguish. This doesn't mean that you aren't recovering-- you simply need to give yourself more time to take it day after day. It won't be quick, and it won't be instant. Like a physical wound, your heart needs the right time and pace to heal.

Consider healthy distractions.

After venting out your emotions, losing a loved one may leave out a void that is nagging to be filled. When this void is not filled, people often undergo the cycle of unhealthy grief that leads to destructive behaviors.

Find ways to fill your time with healthy distractions such as new hobbies. A lot of people find it therapeutic to get a pet, plant their own garden, write, or do outdoor activities to help in the grieving process. These healthy distractions can help ease the pain of loss, without leaving you to constantly feel pain within the day-to-day events.

Have something to look forward to.

Looking forward to something helps people to find the bright side in life. Often, those who dwell in the past find themselves always feeling down and pessimistic-- a state you never want to be in for the long term. Unhealthy rumination can make you unproductive, can bring more feelings of despair, and may not even be helpful for your recovery.

Whether it's a fun event, a time with your



friends, or an upcoming trip, fill your calendar of things to look forward to during your healing process. It can serve as another way to move forward despite the loss of your loved one.

Love lives on: find the ray of light amidst the darkness

Losing your loved one to suicide may seem like a long, dark tunnel that's just all too difficult to get out of. However, understanding that there are simple strategies to cope can help you deal with loss in a healthy way.

Whether you feel like you're fast or slow in your healing journey, always remember that moving forward is what truly matters. Moving forward means keeping your beloved's memories in your heart, while walking towards the ray of light--and finally away from the dark tunnel of grief.

--Adam Durnham

We Decorated This Room For A Different Baby

Soft October light floods the room as I softly glide in the rocking chair, nursing my baby boy to sleep. I'm comforted by the sounds of his little sleepy wheezes as he nods in and out of milk-drunken consciousness. Maybe it's the extra shot of oxytocin flooding my brain from all the baby snuggles, but I swear the room feels so... bright.

I pause in silence, knowing this is one of those moments. You know, the ones you wish you could freeze in time, like a snapshot in your heart, there to return to whenever you want to relive the beauty of that moment one more time.

"This nursery is absolutely stunning," I think. It's every bit as beguiling as I had imagined it would be when my husband and I were building it just last year.

I can still smell the scent of fresh, exposed lumber as I think back to the beginning of our home-building journey. From surveying the land and finalizing the blueprints to pouring the foundation and framing the rooms—this space was always meant to be a nursery. But it wasn't supposed to be his nursery ... because we built this room for a different baby.

The day I found out we were expecting our third child, I snuck away inside our unfinished house for a moment. With my mind swirling with possibilities, I walked into what would eventually be our unborn baby's nursery and imagined how it would look in just nine short months.



In my mind's eye, I saw lace accents and gold sparkles, perfectly fitting for a little girl. And I saw wild animals with rugged finishes if we were going to be adding another little boy to our brood.

I didn't know it then, but I would never get to see which room our baby would get. Because one week later—on Father's Day of all days—I lost the baby who was meant to fill that space. The room that reflects such bright beauty today felt darker than I could ever imagine.

Thankfully, my story didn't end there. God proved faithful in answering my prayers for another child with the rainbow baby I now sit cuddling in the rocking chair. I stroke my thumb across his pudgy baby cheek, thinking about the war that now exists inside my heart each time I look at him. It's a battle I'm sure every mama faces when she's lost a child, feeling the tug between hope and heartache, joy and pain.

How odd it is to stand staring into the sunshine of life with a new baby while the chilly shadows of loss continue to fall on your back. To bask in profound joy over new life in your womb while still nursing the wounds of the empty space that was once there. To long for both the baby you have and the baby you lost, knowing the two could never exist together on this side of Heaven.

It's funny how grief changes you not only from the outside but also from the inside. I live my days feeling it all. Joy, peace, and gratitude share the same mental space as heartache, longing, and hurt.

I can smile and laugh as my son hits new milestones and also cry, thinking about the ones I'll never get to see. It feels wrong, yet somehow, I know that it isn't. That's just life.

Because I can rock in this chair, admiring the beautiful nursery my baby boy gets to occupy ... and still long for the room we built for another baby.

-- Kayla Runkel

Newly Bereaved...

They Call Me Newly Bereaved

They call me newly bereaved,
It seems like time has stood still.
They come with their stories,
Their ideas, their gifts of hope,
And we listen, and we cry, and we listen and we cry.
I go home and think,
I think about what was said at that special place,

With those special people, and it helps.
 It helps put suave on my open wound,
 It helps to heal a heart that will never heal,
 But maybe one day it will not hurt so much.
 I am newly bereaved, but NOT alone.
 --Nancy Fisher TCF, South Bay/LA CA

Seasoned Griefers...

Old Grief

It is a milder storm
 and not so dark.
 It lets you see the shore
 where life goes on
 and brings us gifts
 of memories and joys
 from treasured living.
 But nothing takes away
 the emptiness
 of all those years,
 all those haunted nights,
 of all those lost embraces.
 It is a milder storm,
 but just as grave.
 Old grief does hover
 over soul and mind:
 a heartbreak song
 of timeless disappointment.
 -- Sascha Wagner

Looking Forward...

Remember

When you remember
 me, it means that you have
 carried something of who I
 am with you, that I have left
 some mark of who I am on
 who you are. It means that you can summon me
 back to your mind even though countless years
 and miles may stand between us. It means that if
 we meet again, you will know me. It means that
 even after I died, you can still see my face and
 hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.
 --Frederick B., TCF, "Whistling in the Dark"
 Houston West Chapter



Chance Encounter

Sitting at my table, a stranger, lost in thought,
 Holding her cup closely until my eye was caught.
 She told me of a friend of hers, whose child died
 months ago,
 And that she wanted to help, but how, she didn't
 know.
 "My friend still seems so fragile; her grieving fills
 her days.
 There must be something I can do, or something I
 can say."
 I looked across the table. Her eyes had filled with
 tears...
 How to answer simply, in words that she could
 hear.
 "I too am a grieving mother. I've been there, you
 could say.
 Her hurt is like no other. Have you hugged your
 friend today?"
 "Well I don't really see her much, time seems to go
 so fast.
 She's always on my mind, but I don't seem to get
 the chance...
 And I feel so helpless with her; I can't think of what
 to say.
 There's so much changed about her; a stranger in
 some ways."
 "I know you care about her, and I understand your
 fears,
 But her life has been so shattered; her days are
 filled with tears."
 "She really needs the contact of you and all her
 friends
 Or the walls of isolation will close her sadness in."
 She sighed, "I feel so guilty. I've tried in the past,
 you know.
 Her conversations get so strange. I'm not sure
 where they'll go.
 She talks of dreaming visits with her child who's
 really dead.
 I know it's wishful thinking, that it's all just in her
 head."
 "I believe our children do try to show us they live
 on.
 They touch us in so many ways; they aren't
 completely gone.
 Your friend needs you to listen, to show her that
 you care.
 You can't take the pain away, but it will help to
 have you there."
 "I just wish I could help her. It's just so hard to
 know..."

Friends And Family...



She took a breath and let it out and then she rose to go.

"Good luck," I said, before she turned and slowly walked away.

If she will only listen and hug her friend today.

-- Genesee Gentry, From "Stars in the Deepest Night"



Book In Review...

Another Baby? Maybe... Thirty Questions On Pregnancy After Loss by Sherokee Ilse It addresses the tough questions as well as the ones frequently asked.



Helpful Hint...

It may take years before green shoots of hope begin to appear in your life.

Be patient and keep looking for them.

They will reappear after your long winter of grief.

--Dennis L. Apple



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.

Heaven Got Much Brighter On The Day That I Walked In

Heaven got much brighter on the day that I walked in

I want to tell you so much now, so where do I begin?

You worried deeply on that day that you'd forget my smile

Or that you'd never find another day in life worth while

You thought that when I passed that day that future days you'd dread

The first thing I should tell you is my spirit is not dead

The things that held me back in life no longer have a hold

And I am young and vibrant for in Heaven we're not old

The dreams I had in life have now been placed within my hand

For in Heaven we are miracles in a perfect loving land

I now know that I knew you long before the life we shared

Time for us does not exist our life here cannot be compared

I'm happy now in Heaven more than you could comprehend

Though you will always be my heart, my soul, and simply my best friend

When oceans fall upon your cheeks and smiles can't be found

Just know that I am at your side, for Heaven's all around

Someday these words will all make sense and you'll be happy too

Until that day, live life and smile for I live life through you

--Fara Gibson. The grief toolbox.com

A Mother's Day Gift to God

Lord today is Mother's Day, but our hearts are split in two

Half is with the child still here, the other with the child that is there with you.

All the lovely presents are a nice surprise

But the one thing we want most is missing, and tears fill our eyes.

We know when you sent them Lord, you didn't promise how long they would stay,

All you said was to love them and treasure each and every day.

But Lord it crushed our hearts, when you called for their return

We feel like half a Mom, as we ache weep and yearn.

But Lord tell them we love them just as much as we did before

And could you please make a window, so they can see through heaven's floor.

Let them see that they are missed and thought of with each breath

And that a Mother's love begins before life, and does not end with death.

So on this Mother's Day the greatest gift we give to you

For Lord we know you missed them, and you love them too.

- Sheila Simmons, TCF/Atlanta GA



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 Brooks 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

Alexandra Chi
Born: 2/03 Died: 12/24
Father: David Chi
Parents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marc David Guerrev
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

Zachary Hyun Joon
Jeong
Born: 12/24 Died: 12/24
Parents: Ken Jeong &
Cydne Shapiro

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Matthew "Matty" Louis
Matich
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley
Matich, Grandmother:
Dorothy Matich

Max McCardy
Born: 4/05 Died 8/15
Parents: Derk & Akemi
McCardy

Joseph Mc Coy
Born: 9/11 Died: 11/14
Mother: Amy McCoy

Sarah Mc Donald
Born: 10/00 Died: 6/17
Parents: Tom & Shideh
Mc Donald

John Paul Mc Nicholas
Born: 12/89 Died: 11/20
Parents: John & Leeann
Mc Nicholas

Kirk Nicholas Mc Nulty
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14
Mother: Elaine Mc Nulty

Jeremy Stewert Mead
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14
Mother: Carol Mead

Robert Andrew Mead
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11
Mother: Carol Mead

Nicole Marie Megaloudis
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-
Rongen

Damion Mendoza
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92
Parents: Carlene & Paul
Mendoza

Christopher Metsker
Born: 11/94 Died: 3/18
Parents: Justin & Tara
Metsker

Blanca Isabel Meza
Born: 9/21 Died: 9/21
Mother: Angela Azurdin-
Meza

Mathew Scott Mikelson
Born: 4/77 Died: 4/20
Mother: Dorthy Mikelson

Keith Moilanen
Born: 10/80 Died: 5/19
Mother: Jill Moilanen

Reyna Joanne Monje
Born 9/98 Died: 4/21
Mother: Debbie Trutanich

Jacki Montoya
Born: 10/89 Died: 6/15
Mother: Theresa
Montoya

Joshua Montoya
Born: 4/15 Died: 6/15
Grandmother: Theresa
Montoya

Danielle Ann Mosher
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97
Parents: Paul & Rose
Mary Mosher

Benjamin A. Moutes
Born: 3/07 Died: 5/10
Parents: Kevin & Claudia
Moutes

Danielle Murillo
Born: 5/96 Died: 4/14
Parents: Cheryl Outlaw &
Manuel Murillo

Christopher Murphy
Born: 11/92 Died: 4/18
Mother: Deborah Murphy

Christopher Myers
Born: 10/86 Died: 5/06
Parents: Janet & Larry
Myers

Edward W. Myricks II
Born: 4/72 Died: 10/11
Parents: Edward &
Sandra Myricks

Lisa Nakamaru
Born: 12/93 Died: 10/14
Mother: Grace Nakamaru

Natalie Rose Nevarez
Born: 5/90 Died: 11/14
Parents: Gregg and
Alison Nevarez

Richard Paul Negrete
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04
Mother: Sally Negrete

Stephanie Sue Newkirk
Born: 12/67 Died:
10/15
Mother: Cindy McCoy

Trevor Mitchell Nicholson
Born: 7/99 Died: 1/18
Parents: Brad & Kendra
Nicholson

Steven Scott Nussbaum
Born: 5/61 Died: 11/15
Parents: Will & Gloria
Nussbaum

Sally Anne O'Connor
Born: 12/62 Died: 2/11
Mother: Grace "Darline"
Dye

Isabella Ofsanko
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15
Mother: Desiree Palmer

Dominique Oliver
Born: 5/85 Died: 3/02
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Steven Thomas Pack
Born: 8/91 Died: 3/20
Parents: Tom & Lisa
Pack

Lilly Parker
Born: 12/15 Died: 1/17
Mother: Nicole Kawagish
Father: J.D. Parker

Jessica Perez
Born: 5/89 Died: 10/03
Sister: Monica Perez

Andrew Periaswamy
Born: 5/97 Died: 10/16
Parents: Megala &
Xavier Periaswamy

Dominic Pennington
Roque
Born: 8/02 Died: 9/09
Parents: Kerrie & Ren
Roque

Lindsay Nicole Pollack
Born: 6/94 Died: 11/23
Mother: Daphne Carroll-
Pollack

Donnie Vincent Pulislich
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18
Mother: Maria Pulislich
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.)

A Birthday Tribute to: Edward W. Myricks II April 1972 - October 2011



Dear Son,
 We miss you so much. It's not easy living without you, but we're trying. Even your sister Audrey, keeps pusing our buttons (mostly mine). She said she's doing it to pick up where you left off. You would tease or prank us so much. We loved every minute of it from you and now from her, but don't tell her. We all love and miss you son .
 Happy Birthday, Mom & Dad & Audrey

For Siblings...



Common Sibling Grief Issue: Taking Care of Parents

When asked to edit the sibling page, I was told that each newsletter has unifying themes and this issue would focus on spring and Mother's Day. Mother's Day? I am a bereaved sibling! I thought about siblings being the forgotten grievers. After further thought, however, I realized that Mother's Day creates anxiety for bereaved siblings just as it does for bereaved parents.

Some surviving siblings resent that only their parent's loss is recognized. This sense of being forgotten can be heightened on Mother's or Father's Day when parents expect enhanced sympathy and attention to their grief. Other surviving siblings are consumed with taking care of their devastated parents, perhaps to the extent of neglecting their own grief process. These siblings may experience greater worries about their parents on the impending Mother's Day. Holidays always highlight a family's loss.

For me, I worry about showering my mother with enough love to ease her pain. But, I feel ultimately incapable of being as enthusiastic as I was when Andrea was here to help me cook or decorate the apartment, or to brainstorm, weeks in advance, on whether we should chip in for jewelry or kitchen utensils. I feel strange and empty gift shopping alone. I hate the cards that say "To Mom, from Both of Us". So please parents, remember that all holidays, even Mother's Day, are hard for surviving children too.
 --Allison Hanis, TCF Manhattan online May 2001

He Lives In Me

I shall see him
 in the beauties of the earth,
 in the loveliness of summer sunsets,
 and the loneliness of winter winds.
 In the delicate new life
 of springtime trees,
 in the blazing glory
 of Fall's bright leaves.
 I shall see him in the face of youth
 seeking, straining, for love and truth.
 And in the peaceful face of age,
 completing the journey of our days.
 I shall see hm
 in the ocean's mighty power.
 I shall see hm in the wonder of the stars.
 I shall see him
 in the face of happiness and care.
 I shall see him everywhere.
 -- E. Rita Asher, TCF Cape Cod, MA
 Written at dawn on the day following my brothers' death

For Grandparents...



Grandparents' Grief is Unique

"My grief, unique to me, but oh how unfortunately common."

I used to think about the legacy I was leaving my grandchildren when I died, what would they remember about me? I never thought I would have to remember them. The hopelessness, the frustration, the rage I felt, that not one but two of my grandchildren had died before

I got to know them and just as important, before they got to know me. How unfair of life to cause my beloved daughter and son-in-law so much hurt after the expectation of so much joy, terminating in heartbreak.

What could I do, what could I say, no words could heal the pain, but I needed to show somehow that I too grieved for and loved those my daughter and son-in-law had buried.

I have donated a plaque at our place of worship, I make an annual donation to the Treasured Babies' Program in the names of Jake and Jonathan, I have donated books in their names at my Bridge Club. Has this helped, no not really, but it's something.

Every year is another year I might get to see them again in a better place, this I have to believe.

--Written by Margaret, bereaved Nanna of Jake and Jonathan.

Conference Memories...



Light Rekindled... Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into a flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who rekindle this light.

--Albert Schweitzer

This quote was recently in the daily newsletter at the hospital where I work. Life was full of hopes and dreams for the future. Then the unthinkable happened. Anna's "sinus headaches" became so severe that she became incapacitated. Over the next few weeks the doctors struggled to establish the right diagnosis. Anna had several horrible, malignant brain tumors. In forty-nine days from the diagnosis our "light went out" as our precious child breathed her last breath.

Like others who have experienced the death of a child, our lives were turned upside down without our permission. It all happened so quickly that we were spinning out of control, functioning on auto-pilot, relying on friends to perform many daily tasks. The reality comes soon enough as the intensity of grief seeps into our entire being. As life goes on for everyone around us, we are left to deal with our shattered world and wade into the mucky waters of grief.

Fortunately my husband and I became aware of The Compassionate Friends. We attended national conferences and soaked up all the information, support and hugs that were offered. Today, through the support of family, loyal friends in our church who allowed us to lean on their faith and hope when ours was weak, and with the new friends we have made through TCF, we have found our way to "the other side of grief." It has not been an easy road, but it was one that we had to travel in order to discover wholeness and find the "new normal" that defines the rest of our lives.

Yes, this was the ninth conference we have attended. People ask "why?" "Why do you continue to be part of The Compassionate Friends?" The answer is

easy. The people are fabulous. No one cares what kind of house you live in or what kind of work you do. They care about YOU and the grief you bare. They want to HEAR your story and KNOW YOUR CHILD and SEE his/her picture on the picture board. Their compassion is genuine. They ask how you are because they really want to know. The world tells us to "be over it."

Compassionate Friends, whether it is a local meeting or national conference, affirms and validates YOUR unique grief. TCF is a safe place where you can say anything, cry or not cry, laugh or not laugh, do whatever you want (without causing harm to self or others) without explanation. In addition, the workshops are excellent. The speakers are phenomenal. As hospital and hospice chaplains we have benefitted in recent years from the professional day workshops, where we have learned new ways to bring hope to those who have experienced the death of a child of any age.

Ten years after Anna's death, we continue to attend the National Conference. A high percentage of those who attend are quite newly bereaved, two years or less. On the final evening as we are gathered together in the banquet hall, I look around the room at the hundreds of people in attendance. There is an overwhelming amount of pain in that huge room. Yet, as one by one the candles are lit during the service of remembrance, there is also an enormous amount of hope. Within this family of

TCF, bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents find assurance that their child will remain in their hearts forever and that one day life can be good again.

--Paula Funk TCF Safe Harbor Chapter, MI

Hotel and Conference Registration Now Open

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 48th Annual National Conference in Bellevue, WA

Reservations and more information available at

www.compassionatefriends.org

Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. The next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.



Flash Zoom Meetings... are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration. The intent is to

Check in on each other and share nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccia79@gmail.com for the link.

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

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

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: May first for June 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) 236-3635, 4th Thurs.
 Spanish speaking: Mary Trujillo (323) 347-9469

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: (800) 821-6819

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

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

Other Grief Support Websites...

thetearsfoundation.org
goodgriefresources.com
bereavedparentsusa.org
healingafterloss.org
survivorsofsuicide.com
taps.org (military death)



childloss.com
griefwatch.dom
opentohope.com
webhealing.com
alivealone.org
angelmoms.com

save.org (suicide/depression) M.A.D.D..org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)
www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)
Griefwords.com (for grandparents)

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

Chapter Officers:

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS: Leo & Connie Licciardone
 and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya
 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone
 NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines
 PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks
 TREASURER: Kristy Mueller
 WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

Steering Committee Members:

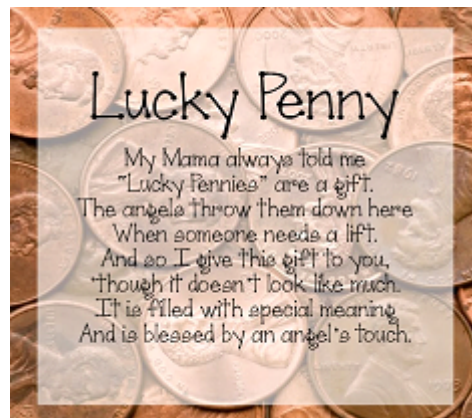
Linda & Joe Zelik
 Marilyn Nemeth
 Bill Matasso
 Nancy Lerner
 Connie & Leo Licciardone
 Sandra & Eddie Myricks
 Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Lori Galloway
 Crystal Henning
 Lynn Vines
 Kristy Mueller
 Kitty Edler
 Susan Kass

National Office Information: Compassionate Friends
 E-Newsletter: TCF National Office publishes a monthly
 e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's
 going on with the organization and its chapters. We
 encourage everyone use the valuable information it
 holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's
 e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national
 website at <http://compassionatefriends.org>. and filling
 out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

The National Office of TCF... has an ongoing support
 group for parents and siblings online. For a complete
 schedule and to register for Online Support, visit
<http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions
 to register. There is also a closed group chat for specific
 topics that you need to register for.





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

No Donations were submitted this month.

With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation, we acknowledge the generosity of the previous individuals and companies. Your tax deductible donation, given, in memory of your loved one enables us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and they also help defray newsletter and mailing costs. Please help us reach out to others in this difficult time. Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

**When making a donation, please make checks payable to:
The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chpt.
Mail to: The Compassionate Friends So Bay/ L.A. Chapter
P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171**

In loving memory of _____ Birth date _____ Death date _____

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, otherwise it will appear in the following issue.

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

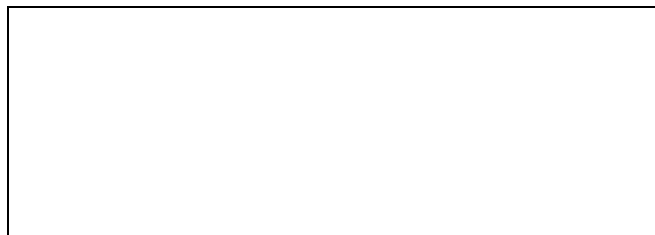
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A CHERISHED THOUGHT
FOR MOTHER'S DAY

*My child may have died;
but my love
and my motherhood never will.*

--- Return Service Requested ---



May 2025

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.