



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

July 2025 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail: Lynntcf@aol.com

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

OUR NEXT MEETING

will be July 3rd , 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 **July 3rd** meeting will start with **"You CAN Do it."**

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 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.

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

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

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

The **Thursday July 3rd** meeting will start with **"You CAN Do It."** With the realization that our child has died, we are consumed with disbelief, pain, exhaustion, legal matters, loss and fear. We can easily feel it's too much to handle and don't know if we can go on. We may find that we question ourselves constantly or that we could care less. The middle ground we are used to living in doesn't seem real anymore and we wonder if we are going crazy or if this is just what happened when a precious child dies. Our normal life will never be the same. There are no magic answers, but we can do small helpful and healing things to help us in our grief. Knowing what has helped other bereaved parents get through their loss can help us find and acknowledge similar ways to help ourselves. Being able to anticipate things, goes a long way from being blindsided when they occur in our own lives.

Many common feelings take place after your child dies and you will probably relate to many of the articles that follow. It will be a struggle to survive unspeakable pain, reestablish a new normal, and face a future that is littered with shattered dreams, assumptions, and expectations. But if you prioritize yourself and take care of yourself while you mourn, you will find your grief work will become easier. Allow TCF to help you with your loss, yearning, and uncontrollable feelings. Everyone will find their own way through grief. Do what you can, don't let depression take over all aspects of your life... seek help. With time and grief work you can do it.

But You're Absolutely Normal!

Grief is a normal reaction to loss, and it shows up in many ways you might not expect. If you've...

- been angry with doctors or nurses for not doing enough
- been sleeping too much or not enough
- noticed a change in appetite
- felt no one understands what you're going through
- felt friends should call more or call less or leave you alone or invite you along more often
- bought things you didn't need
- considered selling everything and moving
- had headaches, upset stomachs, weakness, lethargy, more aches and pains
- been unbearable, lonely, and depressed
- been crabby
- cried for no apparent reason

- found yourself obsessed with thoughts of the deceased
- been forgetful, confused, uncharacteristically absentminded
- panicked over little things
- felt guilty about things you have or haven't done
- gone to the store every day
- forgotten why you went somewhere
- called friends and talked for a long time
- called friends and wanted to hang up after only a brief conversation
- not wanted to attend social functions you usually enjoyed
- found yourself unable to concentrate on written material
- been unable to remember what you just read ...you're normal.

These are all common reactions to grief. They take up to two years (or more) to pass completely, but they will pass. You'll never forget the person who has died, but your life will again become normal, even if it is never exactly the same. Take care of yourself. You will heal in time.

--Joanne Bonelli TCF, Greater Boise Area, ID

9 Self-Care Tips For Grief: Reduce Your Suffering in Mind, Body & Spirit

Grieving is an inevitable part of the human experience, but navigating the grieving process can feel overwhelming. During this difficult time, practicing self-care is not only beneficial but essential to easing the burden of loss.

Grief can affect every aspect of your well-being, from your physical health to your emotional resilience. While it may feel daunting to prioritize yourself, even small steps can have a profound impact on your grief journey.

One of the challenges of times of grief is the need to maintain basic routines, such as eating balanced meals or engaging in simple acts of self-care. These may seem insignificant, but they are crucial self-care tips that help stabilize your energy and emotions.

Grief affects everyone differently; there's no universal time frame for healing, and your reaction to loss will be unique to your personal experience. Whether you're seeking support from a grief counselor, leaning on loved ones, or quietly reflecting, every action counts toward your healing process.

Self-care Tips for Grief

Start with one or two self-care tips that resonate with you. As you grow more comfortable, experiment with additional practices that address other aspects of grief.

Remember, grief is not linear, and it's okay to backslide or feel stuck at times. The most important thing is to keep trying and to give yourself the grace to heal at your own pace.

1. Be kind to yourself... Grief is painful, and though it may seem far-fetched, there is one person capable of offering you comfort 24 hours a day and seven days a week. That person is you. While self-compassion is not a cultural norm, it should be. Self-compassion has tremendous healing power, and it even makes us nicer to be around for others. Treat yourself as you would treat a beloved friend—in word, thought, and deed. Give yourself space to feel the pain of grief, and also give yourself permission to take a break when you need it.

2. Get a check-up...When you are grieving, your risk for illness increases due to stress. And while grief is a natural reaction to loss, and not an illness itself, this is a good time to check in with a healthcare professional.

3. Try to get some sleep...If you are experiencing grief-related insomnia, follow these tips for good sleep hygiene for grief. If you are sleeping more than you did before your loss, know that this, too, is normal, and it may be exactly what you need. If too much sleep is impacting you negatively, in addition to practicing good sleep hygiene, increase your exposure to sunlight, particularly upon waking.

4. Weave in healthy food and drink water when you can... What is your stress food? Mine is Triscuits and butter with a side of ice cream. I get it. When your world falls apart, it is natural to turn toward salty, fatty, and sweet foods. Grief feels like fear, and fear loves fuel.

Instead of forcing yourself to be a food angel, and trust me I am not, eat some broccoli, a banana, or whatever healthy food your body loves in addition to your comfort food. Let go of the shaming, and do your best to get some nutrients into your system.

Drink plenty of water, as it will help your physical and mental state. And do your best to avoid alcohol, as it can disrupt your sleep schedule and depress your mood.

5. Harness the natural power of your breath to soothe you... Breathing fully and with intention

accomplishes two things. First, it turns off the stress response known as fight-flight-freeze. Second, it focuses your mind on the present moment, which can stimulate your mental well-being. Take several one to five minute breaks throughout the day. Close your eyes and take three long breaths—focus on creating a nice, long exhale. Spend the next few minutes focusing on your natural breath.

6. Move your body however works best for you The right kind of physical movement will help your body release the tension and pain that comes with grief. Whether you take a leisurely stroll outside, practice yoga for grief, or go back to the gym, exercise will contribute to better sleep, mental stability, and an overall sense of well-being.

7. Connect with supportive people (soooo important) One of the most important things you can do for your physical and mental well-being is to connect with other human beings (and animals!) who care about you. Sometimes when we are grieving we feel like our support system has fallen apart, so consider joining a peer support group or schedule an appointment with a compassionate grief counselor or therapist who is comfortable talking about grief. Go for a walk with a trusted friend, or schedule lunch with a family member with whom you can share mutual support.

8. Express yourself in creative ways - you don't have to share! You do not need to be a professional writer or artist to benefit from creative expression. Putting your thoughts and feelings into words and pictures can help you make sense of seemingly senseless feelings. Write daily in your grief journal, or make a collage to express your grief with magazines and glue sticks. Crafting activities, such as knitting and drawing in adult coloring books, can help you focus and activate the creative side of your brain, which can increase your resilience and contribute to a better sense of well-being.

9. Meditate to take back control of your mind There are many forms of meditation to help with grief. This includes contemplative prayer, mindfulness and mantra-based meditations, focus and breath practices, guided visualization, walking meditation, and yoga (meditation in motion). Meditation helps you take control of your mind and stay in the present, which contributes to your mental well-being. Practice regularly. The frequency with which you practice is more important than the length of your individual

sessions. Start with two to five minutes a day.

Learn new self-care tools for grief free in Awaken. This self-care list is just the beginning of the tools available to support you through grief. If you're looking to deepen your self-care practice and explore new ways to heal, consider joining the 14-day free trial of Awaken. This online program offers an array of grief-specific self-care tools, including grief yoga to nurture your body, guided meditations to calm your mind, opportunities to connect with others on similar paths, and even creative outlets to express your emotions. Through Awaken, you'll learn how to develop a compassionate and empowering relationship with yourself—one that honors your grief while fostering resilience and hope.

Remember, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to care for yourself during grief. The goal is to find practices that replenish your energy, bring moments of peace, and help you feel more in control of your life after loss. Explore what works for you and know that support is always within reach.

--By Heather Stang, MA, C-IAYT

www.heatherstang.com/9-self-care-tips-for-grief

Being Public Takes Its Toll

*When one is pretending, the entire body revolts.—
Anais Nin*

As we attempt to return to our jobs or our social life, or just to leave the house to do errands, we may feel that we must hold our heads up and keep acting brave. So we talk about things that don't interest us instead of talking about what plagues our heart and mind. We reluctantly agree to do things in which we do not have the slightest bit of interest.

All of this takes a tremendous amount of energy. But it does something else, too. Our bodies are under a great deal of stress as we work through our child's death. Trying to create and maintain an artificial front contributes to that stress. And stress, of course, manifests itself in many ways throughout the body - in headaches, rashes, insomnia, digestive disturbances, the inability to concentrate, and the impulse to fidget or be on the move. We may also have more colds and flues as well as unexplained pains in various parts of our bodies.

One of the kindest things we can do for ourselves is to behave, as much as is possible and

reasonable, in accordance with our deepest needs and desires. We can greatly reduce the amount of time and effort we put into doing what only seems socially required.

I will not push myself into false situations or require myself to perform in a way that differs significantly from my truest self. I will take care of myself by not forcing certain actions or responses, regardless of the pressure put on me to do so. My self, my body comes first, and I need to remember that my body will revolt against pretending.

--Carol Staudacher From A Time to Grieve

Grief Surge Protectors

Grief Surges – those unexpected, out-of-the-blue emotional tailspins that can send us spiraling downward with no forethought and no warning. Like ocean waves that tumultuously surge against the rocky shoreline, our emotions roll over us, bringing back the pain of our grief as if we were experiencing the event that triggered our grief all over again. Ah, if only we could protect ourselves from grief surges!

Sometimes we can predict when a grief surge might occur. Birthdays, holidays, or revisiting places where we shared fond memories with our loved ones who have passed are certainly triggers. But more often than not, they just happen. I can be in quite a good mood, not particularly thinking about my son at that moment, and then it will hit me. I will instantly be transported back to a moment in time on or around that fateful day, and immediately I am panicked and racked with fresh pain over losing him.

If I am lucky, the grief surge may only last a few minutes. But sometimes they last for days, weeks, sometimes longer. Over the first year and a half of Bryan's passing, the surges were non-stop of course. One rolled right into the next and there was no relief whatsoever. Miraculously, over time, they started to subside and I found I could breathe again....until the next one hit me. The longest single surge I have had to date hit me right after Thanksgiving a number of years ago. I spiraled down, down, down.....and I couldn't find the light anymore. I didn't realize I was in a grief surge, I just knew that I was angry, and sad, and depressed. It wasn't until January 1st that I finally started to swim back up from the depths of my pain, and even then it took many messages from

Spirit and loving friends (and strangers also!) so that each new day thereafter I started feeling a little better.

So grief surges are very serious. We all have them. We can't always predict when one is going to hit, and we usually don't recognize we are in them until they have passed!

What can we do? How can we find our way out of the intensity of these surges? Here are a few tips and tools I have learned that might help.

10 Spiritual Grief Surge Protectors

Meditation: If you are not in a daily meditation practice, consider starting. Meditation is simply the practice of sitting quietly and breathing. Breathe in and out, slowly and deeply. You will be amazed at how much better you feel! There is no right or wrong way to meditate. The point is to try and quiet the mind and find the peaceful center of your being.

Bach Flower Essence Therapy: Bach Flower Essences are a natural and simple way to heal our emotional ailments. Rescue Remedy is a perfect remedy for a sudden emotional charge/panic/shock like grief surges. Rock Rose also is great if your surge has underlying emotions of terror and extreme fear. You can find Bach Flower Essences at most natural health food stores.

Reiki Healing: Try a Reiki healing (or any energy healing modality of your choice) as soon as you are aware of your grief surge onset. Reiki is a Japanese healing art developed in the 1800s. Reiki involves laying hands on the body to comfort and relieve pain. Every living thing in the universe has a life force energy flowing through it. This Reiki energy is channeled through the hands of the practitioner into the body and aura of the receiver. Reiki heals on all levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual to balance all of the chakras and helps return the body to its natural perfect state.

Talk to your loved one: Talk to them just like you would if they were still here in the physical. Ask them to guide you and to help with your healing. During your meditation, focus your attention in your heart and summon up an image of your loved one. Stay in your heart, and FEEL the love being exchanged between the two of you. Your loved one will respond with all the love and compassion and energy you could ask for!

Music: Listen to your favorite music and let the sounds wash over you. One of my favorite vocalists is Celine Dion. The richness and clarity of

her voice soothes my soul and helps to restore quiet and calmness to my being.

Get back to Nature: I love to walk outdoors when I am feeling deep grief surges. There is something about being outside and feeling the crisp air on my skin that makes me feel alive again. Even in my darkest hours I can still manage to find joy in the wonderment of Gaia and all her beauty.

Pray: Try talking to the Divine Creator....God.... whatever term is appropriate for you. Ask for healing and understanding, and you shall receive it.

Gratitude: Remember to be grateful every day for whatever you can find to be grateful for. Family, friends, the home you live in, the food on your table, your dog or cat, anything! When we remember what we are grateful for then life doesn't seem quite so full of despair.

Exercise: There's nothing like activating those good ol' endorphins to lift our energy and bring us some clarity of thought. Even if you can only summon up enough energy to walk for 10 minutes...just do it!

Help Someone Else: I find that the more I allow myself to revel in my pain and my grief, the less interested I am in other people. The best cure I know of to get out of my own head is to focus my attention on helping other people. Consider finding a hands-on volunteer activity where your unique gifts and talents can be used in a positive way to impact someone who needs your help.

Do you have a grief surge protector that has helped you in your darkest hours? If so, please share! We all need as much loving support as we can get on this painful journey of loss and grief. Let's help each other, and we will help ourselves at the same time.

Wishing you peace, love and healing on your journey. With God we heal, with Love we forgive, and with Faith we carry on!

--By PaigeLee

Living Life Is Still An Effort

My husband's family held a reunion in July. We planned to attend and told the family to count on us. But when it came time to buy the tickets and make a commitment, I found I couldn't do it. I simply did not want to deal with the hassles of travelling, leaving home, getting out of my daily rhythm.

I am a different person since my child died. I am a different person than I was six months after

my child died. And, I will be a different person in another year.

I find that I am evolving; my basic personality is still intact, most of my mind works well enough, my perception of life, love, people and events is probably heightened but fairly unchanged. Still I am a different person.

Now I work at living my life. I make myself do the things that I once took for granted...such as getting dressed each day, going to work, handling a number of responsibilities I have chosen to accept. I make myself laugh at silly jokes. Sometimes I even have to force myself to really listen to others. I am surprised when I laugh spontaneously, smile for no particular reason or say something "prophetic." What is going on here? Who am I? Why has the joy of life disappeared?

I believe I have found the answer to these questions and even to questions I haven't yet asked. It lies in the nature of losing one's child to death. Initially we work very hard to maintain sanity. Gradually we expand the boundaries of our lives. Carefully we add events, people, responsibilities and simple enjoyment. But our progress is measured in months and years, not days and weeks.

My awakening to this new reality came at a meeting of The Compassionate Friends. It has been rekindled at each meeting since then. I learn about myself by observing others. I note the change in their voice, their body language, their perspective. I see the sorrow in each parent. I see parents whose children have been gone for many years still weep openly and later talk about a special event they are planning. Then I see parents whose loss was recent yet they appear to be normal, controlled and sociable on many levels and they suddenly and mysteriously crumble before my eyes.

That's the journey. We set our own limits as to what is acceptable for us. Over time we shift from minimalist boundaries to a good representation of the person we once were. We have major setbacks: birthdays, holidays, death anniversaries. We sob, we scream, we withdraw. But we do go on. With the help of our Compassionate Friends, we move forward and are supported when we suffer a setback. We each deal with the many facets of our grief. We learn from others. We teach others. We grow from the dialogue. Our kindred spirits bring questions, answers and peace.

Who am I today? A fairly well-balanced mother of one beautiful child who no longer is alive. I am where I should be. When will I stop evolving? Probably never.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin, In memory of my son, Todd Mennen TCF Katy, TX

July's Child

Fireworks race toward heaven
 Brilliant colors in the sky.
 Their splendor ends in seconds
 On this evening in July.
 "Her birthday is this Saturday,"
 I whisper with a sigh.
 She was born this month,
 She loved this month
 And she chose this month to die.
 Like the bright and beautiful fireworks
 Glowing briefly in the dark
 They are gone too soon, and so was she
 Having been, and left her mark.
 A glorious incandescent life,
 A catalyst, a spark...
 Her being gently lit my path
 And softened all things stark.
 The July birth, the July death of
 my happy summer child
 Marked a life too brief that ended
 Without rancor, without guile.
 Like the fireworks that leave images
 On unprotected eyes...
 Her lustrous life engraved my heart...
 With love that never dies.

--Sally Migliaccio ~ TCF/Long Island, NY

Newly Bereaved...

Do You Have Children

There have been many adjustments we have had to make after having lost our only child. Some of these have hit us immediately while others have snuck up on us in unexpected ways. One of the most difficult adjustments for us was trying to answer the question "Do you have children"? That question always seems to crop up in conversations with people we have just met, and every time it brings a prick to our hearts and, at least in the early days, some confusion as to how to answer it. Sometimes it throws us into a fit of tears. At other

times, it may cause us to hastily mutter “no” to protect our too tender hearts and avoid talking about our grief with complete strangers.

Through the years we have answered the question in a variety of ways. We’ve always felt a pang of guilt at denying our child when we’ve said “no”, even though at the time it seemed the most prudent answer for the circumstance. It was a quick, though certainly not painless way to move the conversation on to other things and not have to go into detail about our loss. While we were still trying to figure out how to live with our grief, the “no” answer was the easiest escape for us and caused the least discomfort for others.

Now that we are seasoned grievers, we no longer use that answer. We have always loved talking about our son Matthew and have determined that if that makes the people around us uncomfortable, it is more a problem for them than for us. Even though answering “yes but our child died”, can be an absolute conversation stopper, we have learned to move beyond the discomfort and/or embarrassment (the most typical reactions) of the questioner, by enthusiastically answering “Yes” and moving on to explain that our son has been living in heaven for seventeen years, to thank the person for asking because we love to talk about him.

Unfortunately this too can sometime (but not always) be a conversation stopper. However, it seems to cause the least amount of embarrassment or awkwardness while giving us the wonderful opportunity to tell others about our son.

In every situation in which the question “Do you have children?” is asked, one must quickly analyze the response. Sometimes a brief “Yes, our son now lives in heaven”, is answer enough, and the conversation can move on to other topics. This is especially true if the people we are meeting are ones we don’t expect to meet again. If, however, they are people we will associate with again and again over time, we talk about our son – always remembering to thank them for asking. Our own comfort and joy in talking about Matthew sometimes even transfers over to them as well.

If we are in a business situation or one in which ongoing conversation would not be possible, we merely answer “none still living” and let it go at that. In this way we have honored Matthew’s life without causing too much discomfort to others or spending time in lengthy explanation.

Ultimately, every person must decide for themselves how to answer the question, but I do believe that thinking and planning in advance will give the bereaved parent the most comfort when the question arises. Being prepared is often the difference between the awkwardness and additional hurt that might arise and the ongoing flow of conversation that allow you to move on at your own comfort level.

--written in remembrance of Matthew Ragan Young

Seasoned Grievers...

Progress in Grief: Five Years Out

I still don't understand how this is my life. I've had five years to adapt to what some would term my "new normal" since Evelyn, our eighteen-year-old daughter, died suddenly in her sleep, though there's nothing normal about it. And while I have definitely made peace and progress with elements of this journey I never asked to go on, the truth is, I still don't know how I got here. I'm not sure that horrible morning in August that ruptured our world will ever make sense, that I'll ever have an answer to what happened or how, that this new reality will ever truly sink in. But I am expected to carry on. Despite the enormous uncertainty, the trail of questions, the agonizing longing. And that's precisely what I'm doing. Carrying on. Putting one foot in front of the other down a path.

If you're reading this and you're a month, or a year, or a couple of years down this road, stumbling in the dark, missing your child, I won't tell you it gets easier. I won't tell you you'll get stronger. I won't tell you it hurts less, or that a day will come when you don't pine for them and miss their smile, their smell, the sound of their voice. But I will tell you that like anything else in this universe, it changes. It evolves with you. It moves and morphs and rolls through its own trajectory like a comet streaking through the atmosphere. At times, you'll see grace and awe in the comet's sparkling tail. At others, it will burn like all nine levels of hell at once. You will love the comet.

And you will hate the comet. But the comet will be with you forever now. Take what you can from that wholly useless metaphor because nothing accurately describes the experience you're living in.

People love a transformation story. And they'll no doubt read this and think I've overcome some

terrible obstacle and now my story is complete. But that's not what it's like at all. Evelyn's death has not left me, not even for a moment. It grieves me every step of the way. All of the difficult but natural things I felt that day and every day since are still right here with me. They don't disappear. But my capacity to carry them and still have room for other things has continued to shift and change. I feel all the bad, terrible things about her death still. But I feel so many good, beautiful things now too. In the early days of the After, that just wasn't possible. But the human heart is a strange and wonderful beast, luminous and resilient if given the chance to be. If I deny it nothing, it obliges me in kind.

In other words, by allowing the painful feelings when necessary, I have allowed the pleasant ones right alongside them. Whatever progress I've made hasn't come from repressing my grief, but embracing it. I often think that is exactly how Ev would want it.

--Anna Sweat

Looking Forward...

More thoughts on hope...

I recently met with a newly indoctrinated mom. Her precious 19-year-old son died suddenly of what might have been a congenital heart problem only three months before. Clearly still in shock, trying desperately to understand what she's supposed to do now, we had a leisurely lunch and talked about our kids. We cried, we laughed, we reminisced as if we had known each other for years.

We looked at pictures and gave a face to this unimaginable grief. As always, talking with a Mom so new to this experience, brought it all back for me. All the pain I was so afraid of forgetting, the love and longing I feared to move away from – it was all there, as palpable as it was so many years ago. It really is never very far away. It's always just beneath the skin ready to erupt at the slightest suggestion.

She was sorry she was bringing it all back. She tried to apologize. I recognized her feelings. I remember feeling badly for making other people feel badly when I had to tell them Peter had died. I went to some lengths to avoid people so I didn't have to make them feel badly. How ridiculous that seems now.

So confused, so disbelieving, in such seemingly mortal pain, so wanting to die, she asked me a question her husband suggested she ask me when we met. His question: What did they have to hope for? Now, I've been living and writing about this life for many years. People tell me that no matter how dark my thoughts are, I always seem to end on a hopeful note. I've thought about that and in truth, it is a tough question. After all, I've always found the biggest surprise about this experience is that we don't die from it.

I still think it is amazing that we don't and considering the pain we must slog through for a lifetime, we probably should. But since we don't and I still haven't after all this time, I have given some thought to what I think hope is now. I guess I hope for the smaller things in life. Actually, the smallest things in life. Since I cannot hope for the big things (dancing at my son's wedding, grandchildren...peace in the world) I hope for achievable things:

- a sunny day
- a painless hour
- thinking of Peter with a smile
- enjoying a laugh with friends
- watching my garden grow
- reading a good book
- having a "good" day

So when I am reminded by my friends that no matter how dark, bleak or despairing my writing, I always seem to end on a mildly hopeful note, it's not intentional. But it is natural. I think now that I am fortunate, in a way, that throughout my life, my glass has always been half full. That instinct has served me well during these very dark years. I've always been fairly certain I will eventually see some light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Even while I struggle with the absolute knowledge that I won't see Peter again in this world, I've wrapped myself around the possibility that I will see him in the next.

Today, I can honestly say I'm not sorry I didn't die. I've managed in twelve years to keep Peter in this world a bit longer than if I had joined him. I see how quickly life rushes by. No need to push it. Peter is so present in my life, I wonder now how intensely together we would have been had life been a bigger presence than death. Weird thoughts. Hope? I hope my belief that we'll all be together again someday is true. I hope that someone takes some comfort in finding that they aren't crazy when they read what I write and recognize they have some of the same thoughts

and feelings. I hope that Peter comes to me in another dream someday soon.

I continue to grieve for my lost child and my lost life. But I recognize now that I am not unique. My family has been dealt a lousy hand but we can't simply leave the game. We must play out this hand and honor each other as best we can. I'm a very different person today than I was then – not better – just different. And finally, I hope that everything I've learned about survival and everything I do to share that knowledge, will serve as a fitting tribute to my son – a young man whose abbreviated life here on earth may have served some purpose beyond my understanding.

It's been a hot summer. Now we must gather our strength for the seasons ahead. School's almost back in session - can Halloween and the holidays be far behind? Life goes on my dear, dear friends. Hope for the best.

--Marie Levine

Friends And Family...

Please Be Gentle

An Afterloss Creed

Please be gentle with me, for I am grieving. The sea I swim in is a lonely one, and the shore seems miles away. Waves of despair numb my soul as I struggle through each day. My heart is heavy with sorrow. I want to shout and scream and repeatedly ask, "Why?"

At times, my grief overwhelms me, and I weep bitterly, so great is my loss. Please don't turn away or tell me to move on with my life. I must embrace my pain before I can begin to heal. Companion me through my tears and sit with me in loving silence.

Honor where I am in my journey, not where you think I should be. Listen patiently to my story. I may need to tell it over and over again. It's how I begin to grasp the enormity of my loss.

Nurture me through the weeks and months ahead. Forgive me when I seem distant and inconsolable. A small flame still burns within my heart, and shared memories may trigger both laughter and tears. I need your support and understanding. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. I must find my own path. Please, will you walk beside me?

--Jill Englar, Westminster, Maryland



Book In Review...

The First Year Of Forever by Ben Van Vechten. On surviving a teenager's accidental death. Other bereaved parents may find their own reactions are not unusual but in fact normal and typical.

Helpful Hint...

"It is okay to be angry, and it is important to express, not suppress, anger. Suppressed anger can result in deep depression. It is also all right to be angry with God. He is forgiving and understands our emotions. He would rather have us be angry with Him than shut Him out." —Penny A. Blaze

Welcome...

Newcomers Welcome

We know it's hard to take that first step to attend your first meeting. Bringing someone along can help you take that first step. There are misconceptions about what our meetings are like. Are we sitting around having a pity party? NO! We learn healthy ways to deal with our grief. Does crying mean we are out of control? No! It means we hurt. Do others understand why we continue way past the time they think we shouldn't need it anymore? Some of us have stayed so others will have a place to come to heal. Aren't we glad others don't understand!

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.)

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

Born: 7/88 Died: 9/17
Mother: Thessia
Carpenter

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

Parents: Linda &
Douglas Dobie

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

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

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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Larry Broks Jr.

Aaron Christopher

Ryan Dobie
Born: 7/92 Died: 2/19

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	Christie Hagenburger Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17 Father: D.W. Hagenburger	Jeong Born: 12/24 Died: 12/24 Parents: Ken Jeong & Cydney Shapiro	Bryan Yutaka Lee Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07 Mother: Kathee Lee
Chidinma Ezeani Born: 8/89 Died: 10/19 Mother Ifeoma Ezeani	Bishop Michael Hernandez Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21 Father: John Hernandez	Emily Matilda Kass Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06 Mother: Susan Kass	Steven J. Lee Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06 Mother: Donna Lee
Robert Justin Fields Born: 1/00 Died: 1/22 Parents: Loree & Bob Fields	Jesse Hernandez Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22 Mother: Joann Hernandez	Jillian Nicole Katnic Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18 Mother: Debbie Hughes	Emma Nicole Lerner Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06 Mother: Nancy Lerner
Shawn Eric Fillion Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21 Mother: Lise Fillion	Jennifer Nicole Hower Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04 Brother: Jeff Hower	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
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	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
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	Chase King Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19 Mother: Laura King	Gaby Lindeman Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12 Parents: Gilberto & Graciela Rodriguez
Miles Andrew Gallas Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21 Mother: Denise Gallas	Taylor X. Hyland Born: 8/06 Died: 7/20 Mother: Tessa Hyland	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
Mark Scott Galper Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97 Mother: Sheri Waldstein	Steven Ishikawa Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17 Mother: Miki Ishikawa	Scott Koller Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15 Mother: Betty Benson	Richard Lee Luthe Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98 Parents: Jeff & Lorraine Luthe
Lexie Rose Gilpin Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09 Mother: Michele Gilpin	Alexander John Jacobs Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19 Mother: Diane Jacobs	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
Steven Paul Giuliano Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95 Mother: Eleanor Giuliano	Stefanie Jacobs Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97 Father: Rob Jacobs	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
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	Michael Kroppman Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12 Parents: Brenda & Greg Kroppman	Janet Sue Mann Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10 Mother: Nancy Mann
Leslie Geraci Hart Born 6/66 Died: 7/11 Father: John Geraci	Lizzie Jester Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18 Father: Lee Jester	Cherese Mari Lulhere Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96 Parents: Larry & Chris Lulhere	Alex J. Mantyla Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08 Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla
Adam Guymon Born: 4/89 Died: 4/06 Mother: Eileen Guymon	Zachary Hyun Joon		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
Match
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley
Match, Grandmother:
Dorothy Match

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

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: Dorothy 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

Parents: Bob & Gwen
Slater

Sister: Jackie Taus
Mother: Susan Taus

Vines

Sarah Lynne Redding
Born: 12/80 Died: 12/05
Mother: Linda Redding

Spencer Simpson
Born: 1/80 Died: 6/13
Parents: Rich & Shelly
Simpson

Jacqueline Marie Taylor
Born: 1/83 Died: 7/11
Mother Jennifer Flynn

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

Aaron Rico
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10
Parents: Cameron &
Annette Rico

Nicholas M Sinclair
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22
Mother: Suzanne
Sinclair

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

Matthew L. Weiss
Born: 9/96 Died: 8/18
Mother: Natalie
Narumoto

John Patrick Rouse
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02
Mother: Sharon Rouse

Paul Slater
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16
Parents: Bob & Gwen
Slater

Ryan William Thomas
Born: 2/82 Died: 4/04
Mother: Linda Thomas

Rennie S. Wible
Born: 8/66 Died: 1/18
Mother: Jinx Wible

Michael B. Ruggera, Jr.
Born: 4/51 Died: 4/96
Parents: Michael &
Frances Ruggera

Dale Lee Soto
Born: 7/94 Died: 5/11
Mother: Monique Soto

Michael D. Toomey
Born: 4/62 Died: 2/05
Parents: Michael &
Elizabeth Toomey

Dovan Vincent Wing
Born: 6/83 Died: 9/17
Mother: Becky Wing

Danny Ryan
Born: 07/79 Died: 10/15
Parents: Mike & Andrea
Ryan

Patrik Stezinger
Born: 1/89 Died: 8/17
Parents: Paul &
Rosemary Mosher

Catarina Sol Torres
Born: 12/16 Died: 12/16
Parents: Marcus &
Vanessa Torres

Aaron Young
Born: 9/74 Died: 6/15
Mother: Sheila Young

Steve R. Young
Born: 7/57 Died: 2/90
Mother: Marjorie Young

Andrew Patrick Sakura
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08
Parents: Bruce & Karen
Sakura

Jonathan David
Streisand
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13
Parents: Pricilla & David
Streisand

Carlos Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 1/12
Parents: Antonia &
Refugio Valdez

Whitney Marie Young
Born: 8/87 Died: 11/06
Parents: Marlene &
Steve Young

Daniela Mora Saldana
Born: 3/17 Died: 3/17
Mother: Rosa Saldana

Brittany Anne Suggs
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/16
Mother Camille Suggs

Vance C. Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 3/12
Parents: Carlos & Maria
Valdez

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

Lisa Sandoval
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92
Parents: Susan & Ruben
Sandoval

Elizabeth D. Szucs
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11
Parents: Dolores & Frank
Szucs

Lexi Noelle Valladares
Born: 4/04 Died: 7/10
Parents: Fausto & Erica
Valladares

Thomas Zachary
Born: 12/85 Died: 7/11
Father: Bob McGaha

Phillip Ruben Sandoval
Born: 7/84 - Died: 6/16
Parents: Valerie & Joe
Desjardin

Manuel Vargas III
Born: 3/95 - Died: 5/15
Father: Manuel Vargas

Michael Jordan Zareski
Born: 5/71 Died: 12/17
Parents: Susan & Norm Zareski

Andrew Sankus
Born: 4/71 Died: 8/15
Mother: Mary Sankus

Kenneth Tahan
Born: 2/66 Died: 7/16
Parents: Shirley &
Joseph Tahan

Mark T. Vasquez
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/11
Parents: Manuel &
Blanca Vasquez Jr.

Kevin Zelik
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

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

Anthony Tanori
Born: 8/82 Died: 8/12
Parents: Chuck & Sylvia
Tanori

David Michael Villarreal
Born: 11/90 Died: 2/18
Parents: David &
Barbara Villarreal

Christopher Zuchero
Born: 5/85 - Died: 5/22
Parents: Mike & Shelly Rudeen

Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94

Jamie Taus
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21

Eric Douglas Vines
Born: 7/77 Died: 7/91
Parents: Doug & Lynn

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

A Birthday Tribute to: Eric Douglas Vines July 1977 - July 1991



Dear Eric,

It's almost birthday time again. As I listened to the neighbors' kids playing, I thought about all the wonderful summer days I spent with you, Eric. I am grateful that we had that time to make special memories in your life.

In the beginning of my grief, I never thought I would remember your birthdays without tears and the pain of losing you. But, with time and hard work, that has changed. That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of losing our child. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience.

Now, when something reminds me of you, I lovingly think of you and remember the smile you always had. I remember the years spent with you and what we have shared, both good and bad. I will always miss your sweet voice and your unconditional love. For all the smiles and tears, for all of the love and laughter, and above all, for being the son that you were, I will carry you in my heart forever.

Happy Birthday, Love, Mom

For Siblings...



Here is the foreword to "Healing the Adult Sibling's Grieving Heart" written by sibling Amy Anderson:

Seven years ago, my life changed forever. It started with the fateful phone call from my panic-stricken mother. I will never forget that conversation. The moment in time is as real now as it was that day. Her piercing words are still ringing in my ears. The scream that erupted from my own lungs is still vivid and painful. My exact location, my clothing, the weather and even the short drive I had in front of me is so real. As if it just happened.

Her words were, "Amy, your brother is dead." And everything changed. My future changed. My past changed. My life changed. Forever.

My strong, intelligent, "on-top-of-the-world," entrepreneurial, well liked, supportive, understanding, funny, charming, loving adult brother was gone. My best friend and confidant was gone. Forever. And my life would never be the same.

My dreams for him, for our future together, were gone. I would never have a sister-in-law, a niece or nephew, a large gathering full of family... my family. The reality that I was "it" – alone, the only child, the only person left to take care of our parents in the future – hit so hard. Not Mitch and I, as we had joked and teased about for years. Just me.

People often ask me how my parents are doing since Mitch's death. How my grandparents are doing. How my children are doing. And even how my brother's dog is doing. What they don't ask is how I'm doing. It's just understood that because I'm an adult, I'm dealing with this loss differently or more valiantly than others. Or perhaps it's that the relationship I had with Mitch was different than the relationships they share with their siblings. I'm not sure.

I do know that I lost my "partner -in-crime," a person I don't remember life without, my best friend. I am blown away with emotion. I have deep sadness for the things that will never be the same and for the things I will never have with my brother. I miss the childhood validation I got from him and our long talks about what we looked forward to in the future.

It has been eight years since Mitch died, and I can say that my grief has softened. In the beginning, I couldn't talk about his life or death without crying and feeling gut-wrenchingly devastated. Now I'm more able to remember his life, not just his death.

What has helped me with my grief? Talking about him has been the biggest help. Every time I tell the stories of his life and death, my emotions get a little less raw and I feel a little stronger. In (this) book Dr. Wolfelt advocates actively remembering your brother or sister who died. It's true. The more you remember, and the more you share those memories – good and bad – aloud with others, the more you will begin to heal.

My family also makes a point of remembering Mitch on special days. We tell stories about him on holidays and we honor him in other ways. For us, it helps to acknowledge Mitch's life even as we move

forward with our own.

The Compassionate Friends Sibling Credo

We are the surviving siblings of The
Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our
brothers and sisters.

Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us.

Sometimes we need our families to be there.

Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our
memories with us, to become the individuals we
want to be.

We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however a
special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives
changed.

We are living a life very different from what we
envisioned and we feel a responsibility to be strong
even when we feel weak.

Yet we can go on because we understand better
than many the value of family and the precious gift
of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we
are, but to walk together to face tomorrow as the
surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

Exploring my spirituality after Mitch's death has
also helped me heal. My faith has changed and
deepened since Mitch died. At first, I was furious
with God, but by exploring my spirituality through
discussions with spiritual leaders and friends, and
after reading many books, I've found hope.

Even though Mitch is no longer here, I know
he's not gone either. I encourage you to try some
of the excellent ideas in Dr. Wolfel's compassionate
book. Learn more about grief and mourning. Find
people who will listen to you tell your story of love
and loss for your sibling. Become an advocate for
yourself and your own healing – especially in our
culture, which tends to downplay the importance of
sibling loss.

You miss your brother or sister. I deeply miss
Mitch too. We understand each other, you and I. I
hope you will be comforted in the knowledge that
others have walked the same path you walk and
have ultimately found a sense of peace.

-- Amy Anderson



For Grandparents...

From Our Members...

Laughter

Can you think of anyone that deserves happiness
more than a bereaved
parent? I can't! Yet, after your child dies, you find
yourself feeling guilty
when you laugh or are diverted for a moment from
your pain. It's as though
there's an unwritten rule that says a parent's depth
of grief and love will be
measured in direct proportion to the lack of joy and
the inability to take
pleasure in any part of life again. Laughter is as
important to your recovery
as tears. It is as vital as the bee to blossom. It
provides a balance that you
need in your life right now. Many people have
survived by finding
something funny and thus relieving and releasing
some of the stress
involved when coping with life's tragedies. If you are
able to find something
you can laugh about, do it! It doesn't mean you
don't love, care, or miss, nor
that you have forgotten. It just means you know not
to judge your depth of feeling by whether or not you
can smile. Grief changes as we go along and it is
okay to let go of some of the symptoms of early
grief
when you are able. To do so in no way insults the
memory of your child. Some are afraid to let go of
anything for fear they will forget. It is important for
you to know that option is not available to you.
You will always remember your child. The fact that
he or she lived and died is a part of who and what
you have been, are, and will be. Most try to be good
to themselves by eating the right foods and
exercising, with the hope that the end result will be
trim bodies and unlined faces. Those things are well
and good, but it turns out that the kindest thing you
can do for yourself is to develop some lines on your
face-laugh lines-for as someone once said, "He
who laughs, lasts," and he also survives in a better
way.

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: June first for July 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

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	childloss.com
goodgriefresources.com	griefwatch.dom
bereavedparentsusa.org	opentohope.com
healingafterloss.org	webhealing.com
survivorsofsuicide.com	alivealone.org
taps.org (military death)	angelmoms.com
save.org (suicide/depression)	M.A.D.D..org
pomc.com (families of murder victims)	
grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)	
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:

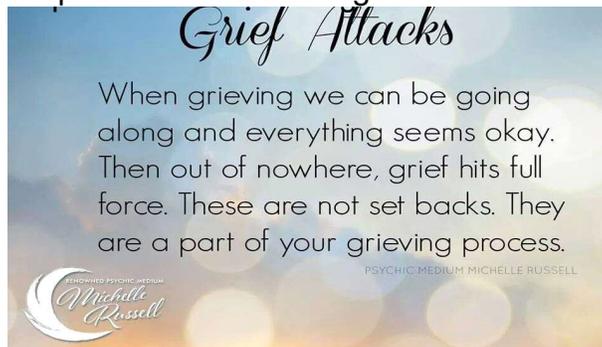
Linda & Joe Zelik	Lori Galloway
Marilyn Nemeth	Crystal Henning
Bill Matasso	Lynn Vines
Nancy Lerner	Kristy Mueller
Connie & Leo Licciardone	Kitty Edler
Sandra & Eddie Myricks	Susan Kass
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla	

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



The Little Things

Often, even the simple tasks of everyday living seem to drain every ounce of one's energy. Remember going to the grocery store even months after your child's death and the feelings you had as you passed up his or her favorite cereal? Or watching another child the same age as yours in a restaurant and trying to swallow your food – you probably didn't even taste it. Or hearing a certain song in public and fighting back the tears?

Sometimes even getting through the day in your own home makes you feel like you've run a marathon and leaves you in worse shape. You probably never dreamed that doing the family laundry could make you cry or that getting a piece of mail in your child's name could suck your breath away.

Even the best of friends and families can't possibly know the strength you must summon day after day after day. We shouldn't expect them to understand completely, but it does get lonely. Perhaps this quote puts it in a nutshell: "One sad thing about this world is that the acts that take the most out of you are usually the ones that other people never know about."
--Anne Tyler, TCF/Sacramento Valley, CA





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

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT 3223
Torrance CA 90503



July 2025

— Return Service Requested —



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.

©2025 THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS -- SOUTH BAY/L.A., CA CHAPTER

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