



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Dec. 2025 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING:
will be Dec. 4th, the first *Thursday* of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: use this one
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 Dec. 4th meeting will start with "**Bereaved Families & December Misgivings**".

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 Dec. we will meet at Chili's restaurant at 21835 Hawthorne Bl. Torrance. We invite you to join us. Please call (310) 963-4646 to let us know you are coming for seating arrangements .

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

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The **Thursday Dec 4th** meeting will start with with **“Bereaved Families & December Misgivings”**. December can be brutal. As a newly bereaved family, you are certain things will never be happy again, that this terrible pain will always be a part of you. This often leads to extra anxiety as the holidays approach. “How am I ‘gonna’ do this?” We may have not had a choice in becoming bereaved, but we do have choices in how we face December. You have a choice to make the holidays for your family and yourself something that will be helpful and healing. While not easy, you will make it through. No matter what you do, the anticipation is often worse than the actual event.

This year the National Office has a free webinar called **Healing Through the Holidays Grief on December 17th**. You must register for it in advance at www.compassionatefriends.org The holiday season can intensify grief, highlighting what - and who - is missing. In this compassionate and practical session, they will explore why grief often feels different during the holidays and how to navigate the secondary losses that surface this time of year. Participants will learn how to create a personalized plan for coping, approach traditions with intention, and find meaningful ways to honor both loved ones and themselves throughout the season.

Memorials to our children like the World Wide Candle Lighting have helped many friends and families. In the following articles you will find suggestions on how others have coped. See if any of them might work for your family. Remember, if something doesn't work, there is always next year when you can try something different. I hope you take advantage of TCF's support and suggestions to make December easier to face. If you need additional support, remember the phone friends listed in the back of the newsletter are there to listen.

Traditions: What to Keep and What to Let Go

Traditions are very important to our families, and we may share large and small ones throughout the year. Some may be in conjunction with significant events like a graduation or a wedding,

and others occur annually on birthdays and holidays. Traditions are passed down through generations, creating comforting experiences and memories that provide a sense of belonging. After our child, grandchild, brother, or sister dies, however, what once was comforting can be painful and intolerable.

This holiday time of the year is often particularly hard for managing different needs within our bereaved families. Whether a few months have passed, a few years, or decades, the empty chair that belonged to our child, sibling, or grandchild, requires us to re-evaluate how traditions feel. Trying to keep a tradition that fit our “before” family may not feel the same or good.

It is especially important to recognize the differing needs of siblings and parents when deciding what to keep and what to let go. For a parent, trying to continue a tradition as it was but with one less child can be very heartbreaking. For a bereaved sibling, losing a tradition that they came to depend on can feel like they're losing even more and have less to count on than ever. When one sibling remains, it can feel overly burdensome to be the sole daughter or son who carries those traditions.

What can we do to manage such deep and personal needs that differ in a family after substantial loss? Here are some steps that can help.

- Sit down together and discuss how everyone is feeling about the upcoming holidays.
- Allow everyone to share how continuing each tradition makes them feel and which may be prohibitively distressing this year.
- Listen compassionately to one another, understanding that needs can vary widely within any loving family unit.
- Work hard to compromise. Try to differentiate what might be difficult for a family member to continue from what would be unbearable.
- Eliminate the ones, for now, that would bring more harm than benefit to any family member.
- Reduce holiday expectations so that each family member has a chance to cherish a tradition that is meaningful and grieve what has been lost.
- Keep traditions that are too upsetting for anyone until another year. Individual and family needs change year to year, and there may be room for those another time.

Having these challenging discussions can be surprisingly valuable as they prompt deeper sharing that can bring us closer. Even long-time



bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings can find decision making about what to keep and what to let go of painful at different stages. Allow the flexibility to change when something doesn't feel right since we may be surprised by painful triggers. As we remain open and flexible through each year that passes, we help our families keep some traditions, modify others, and cherish what remains.

--Shari O'Loughlin TCF CEO

Limp Stockings and Empty

Chairs Posted on December 20th, 2024

The holiday season after a loved one dies is exhausting. It is exhausting because the poignancy of each ornament, stocking, favorite dessert, and Christmas tree farm outing, crystallizes the pain of their absence and their continued presence in relentlessly concrete, visible ways from Halloween through the New Year.

How we live into this tension, honoring their presence and grieving their absence, is the ongoing, organic, at times sloppy, endless work of the bereaved. It is not easy to do. As my family and I approach the 10th holiday season without our son, Mack, who died suddenly on New Year's Eve 2012, two weeks shy of his ninth birthday, I would like to share a few practices that seem to help each of us, though in different ways.

A Stack of Permission Slips

We have heard it a million times: everyone grieves differently. This is true, but it is very annoying. It is annoying because I have had to learn to be patient with my husband, C, in ways that I would never have before Mack died. And, of course, he with me. The same moments truly do hit us differently and it still takes me by surprise. We have learned to give one another space, "I'm just feeling the feels," we say to one another to give permission to feel what the other may not feel without question or judgement.

The first Christmas after Mack died, in 2013, we continued our tradition of cutting a fresh tree and putting it up in the family room. While C and Mack's big sister, Iz, wrestled with the tree lights, I hung the stockings above the fireplace and decorated the mantel. Tucked inside Mack's stocking was a miniature stocking for Fiona who was his dwarf hamster. Mack had written Fi-Fi, her nickname, in marker across the top of the mini

stocking and drawn a picture of her as well as he could with a Sharpie. "That's supposed to be Fi-Fi," Mack explained when he hung it during the Christmas of 2012.

"I got it," I smiled. And smiled again as I hung Fiona's small stocking on the same hook as Mack's and felt him near.

C came up behind me and whispered in my ear. "Mack's stocking looks so sad. It's so empty," he said with tears. "It pains me." "It pains me, too," I nodded. "But, I don't know how to do this any other way? Iz deserves the best of us."

A friend had shared with me at Mack's wake that his brother had died when he was 15, the same age of Iz at that time, and that his parents essentially died as well. "I lost all of them," he said, "even though my parents were still there." His comment pierced me, stuck with me, and I determined not to lose both children, one to death and the other to my grief. C and I had spoken of this many times. I didn't need to say it again. He knew. "I know, I know. I agree. I just hurt," he said.

We still hang Mack and Fiona's stockings alongside ours. And, so that it doesn't look so limp, we encouraged one another to drop mini Legos, Swedish Fish, or fun gifts that remind us of Mack into his stocking throughout the month. Then, on Christmas Day, Iz volunteers to open Mack's stocking and we delight in the little surprises and trinkets that have made their way into his stocking throughout the month. Somehow the visible gifts are an invitation for his joyful presence to be with us.

Plan Ahead

If your child, your parent, or another loved one has died, and this is the first holiday without them, nothing can prepare you for the feeling of gathering around the familiar dining table with an empty chair. But, you can prepare their favorite apple pie.

As awkward as it feels, you want to talk to whomever is hosting ahead of time about how to remember your loved one as you gather for the holidays. You do not want to assume someone else is taking care of it. Or worse, that everyone arrives at the table and realizes the absence of that person has become a giant presence in the room because no one has acknowledged it!

Think of things like favorite desserts, a special name tag, or a candle, as a gentle opening for your loved one to be present with you.

Because Mack was our young son, we were



able to step in as his parents and plan his remembrance at family Thanksgivings. We trade off Thanksgiving every other year between my family and my husband's family, and the first Thanksgiving after Mack's death happened to be with my family. I am the eldest of four, so Mack and Iz had six young cousins at that time – three more have been born since he died. We supplied balloons and markers and invited each family member to write a note to Mack, or draw a picture, on the balloon before blowing them up with helium and tying them together to the back of a dining chair as a way to include Mack and allow space to speak of him in a light-hearted way.

Since that first year without Mack, I still send a note to my parents and each of my siblings ahead of time to share the plans so that everyone is aware and there are no surprises. The whole family is supportive – “just tell us what you want us to do!” has been the response. Now, remembering Mack has become a part of the Thanksgiving tradition, even for the younger cousins he never met in person. We offer the opportunity and materials, but participation is not required, and not everyone does.

Put the Mental Abacus Away

It is hard, but important, to remember that grief is as unique to each person as their personality and giving permission for each family member to respond, or not, as and when they choose is a gift of generosity. Everyone at the table has passed through a threshold into a new terrain and learning how to live into life after the death of someone takes time and many permission slips.

Added to the death of your family member, everyone brings other losses to the table, some known and some unknown to those gathered. It helps for each of us to put the mental abacus away, to resist the urge to weigh and measure one another.

Above all, give yourself permission to remember and celebrate your loved one! There may be some members of the family who are strangely silent and disapproving of your ideas. You do not need to wait for permission to remember someone you love.

Bake the pie, light the candle, buy the gift, hang the stocking, make a donation in their name, cry sloppy tears, and laugh out loud at an outrageous card that you definitely would have given them were they still here, and buy it anyway!

Truly, truly, love does not die. Their absence is painful and their presence is endless love.

--Elizabeth Brady Bluegrass KY newsletter

The First Chanukah

The first year of Chanukah was extremely difficult. Linda died on February 1st so by the time Chanukah arrived; the shock and numbness had disappeared. We could no longer pretend that she was on a business trip or visiting friends. We knew that she wasn't coming back.

Chanukah had been an important part of our family life. In addition to the lighting of the candles, we had created our own traditions and rituals. Chanukah is mostly a children's holiday but my family continued these observances when my daughters became adults. The tear streamed down my face as I lit the ritual candles that first year. We decided to discontinue the parties, singing, special foods, and all of our other observances. They were too painful.

We've become snowbirds and spend Chanukah in Florida. I still light the candles – usually by myself – but otherwise keep the holiday very low key and skip the rest of the festivities. Since I don't have young children or grandchildren to think about, this doesn't create any problems. There's always a pang, but it has softened over the years. As a veteran bereaved parent, I am resigned to the fact that I will never celebrate with my entire family again.

Therefore, I didn't expect the eight year of Chanukah to be unusual. I thought I had come to terms with the holiday. So why was the eight so difficult? Was it the fact that the eight anniversary was approaching? Was it the symbolism of eight nights of candles and eight years? Or was it just a coincidence or the blind siding that sometimes occurs without warning to those who have grieved for a long time? I probably will never know the answer and have decided that, as with many other things, it just the grief is. I'm just glad that, after eight years, the grief and pain usually are softer than they were in the early years.

--Stephanie Hesse, TCF NY

Bah-Hum-Bug Christmas

It's here again. I know when Halloween gets here another Bah-Hum-Bug Christmas without Jamie isn't far behind. This will be my fourth Christmas without Jamie. What will I try and do to get me



through this year?

My sisters and I started a tradition when our father died in November of 1987. We started putting a Christmas tree every year at the cemetery. In 2007, I started putting up two; one for our dad and one for my son, Jamie. My sisters help with Dad's tree, but Jamie's brother Chase and I put up Jamie's. We do this during the Thanksgiving weekend and take it down on New Year's Day.

This is our gift to him. We decorate it just like the ones we had when he was here with us. Putting up a tree for Jamie is a way for Chase and I to cope with the holidays without my son and his brother. All through the year, I am always on the look-out for new ornaments that can adorn his tree. The first two years, it was decorated with big blue ribbons (the color of those magnificent eyes of his) and butterflies.

Last year it had a clown topper with polka dot ribbons, snowmen, motorcycles, skate boarders and of course, I had to find a couple of good looking females to add to the tree. We will use the clown topper this year as well, and next year we will do something new. But, if you knew Jamie, you would understand the clown. He was always clowning around and playing tricks on everyone he knew, and then some.

I find that one of the most amazing things that happens during this time is that family, friends and other bereaved parents will stop and visit with Jamie. They also put their own ornaments on the tree. I find it very heart warming that he is remembered during this time of year. Also, that it may be somewhat comforting to other bereaved parents that visit as well. I look forward to seeing if I can find a new ornament on the tree when I go to Jamie's. Then I try to guess who has visited my loving, compassionate, free-spirited angel, Jamie. May he always be remembered and forever loved.

Try as you might, you can't escape the holiday season. I still approach the holidays with fear and trepidation, but I do hope Jamie's story may help other bereaved parents in some way to cope. Hopefully, they will come up with ways to honor the memory of their sons and daughters.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas.
--Suzie & Memories of Jamie

Alex Coming Home

Alex sent me an e-mail just before he died with

details of his holiday flight home from college in Colorado. The subject line read: "Alex Coming Home." He was coming home, just not to his home in this world.

That was December fourteen years ago. I went to my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends two months later and returned every month because it was a safe place. Everyone around me loved their child as much as I loved Alex. Everyone around me knew the same crushing heartache that left me disoriented and exhausted.

I am grateful for the love and support I found at the meetings. I am grateful for the grieving parents who listened when I shared my pain and anger, my joys and my regrets. We smiled and laughed and cried. And all the time, our beautiful children were there with us. We brought back our missing babies, toddlers, teens, and adults if only for a few hours... and it was good. I learned to accept the endless heartache. I learned that I was not alone.

-- Susan Singer Mother of Alex TCF Chapter Los Angeles CA

Suicide—An Eternal Pain

Suicide is the one form of death that has quite a stigma attached to it. It brings with it a feeling of shame and betrayal. It is not the same as saying to someone "My father died in a car crash," nor is it the same as saying someone died from a heart attack. Having to explain that someone took their own life can be quite a difficult thing to do as we have no explanation as to why this dreadful occurrence took place.

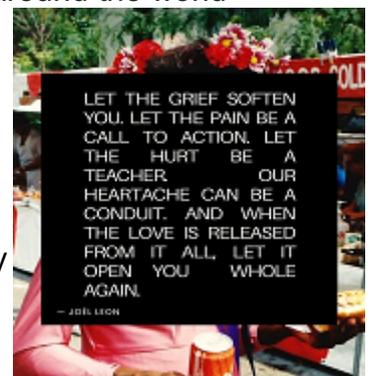
Suicide amongst young men is currently growing quite significantly around the world

-- James Evans

The Pain Softens with Time

Posted on Nov.19th, 2024

On October 7, 2006, my life changed forever. As I held my daughter in my arms, my only child, my beautiful 2 1/2-year-old was removed from the machine that had been keeping her alive for the last 3 days. Kaylee had contracted a rare strain of bacterial meningitis and was declared brain dead only 24 hours after I had taken her to the doctor for a stuffy nose and fever. How could this have



happened to me and my family? Our beautiful little Kaylee Rose was gone, and I was completely devastated and lost.

I was a stay-at-home mom. My days consisted of caring for my daughter, taking her to Mommy and Me classes, going for walks to the park, and running errands with my little best friend always by my side. Now my days were empty, mostly spent in bed crying. It took all my energy just to brush my teeth. What was the point of living without my daughter? I thought about ending my life but how could I inflict this unbearable pain I was experiencing on my own parents.

My husband and I went for therapy. We went to bereavement groups. I read a lot of books about grief. We were lucky to have a very supportive group of friends who did food shopping for us and tried to get us out of the house. Most importantly, they would listen and cry with us when all we wanted to do was talk about our daughter and share stories. I found it very difficult to go to stores alone. Kaylee was always with me...in the backseat singing along to her favorite CDs, riding in the shopping cart chatting as we did our errands.

About 6 months after she passed, I found myself in Target.... alone, just wandering missing my little sidekick. How was the world going on around me? I started to notice ladybugs. Not real ones but on different items. Kaylee had been a ladybug for her last Halloween. I took this as a sign from my daughter that she was proud I was out of the house, trying to do something normal. She was still with me, not physically but always in my heart.

Time moved on and slowly I found my way out of the darkness. We got through all the first year "firsts." We didn't celebrate holidays any longer. It was too difficult to pretend to be happy. Halloween was especially tortuous. We chose to go away for these holidays to places where there weren't many children. For the one-year anniversary we went to Las Vegas. I can't say it was fun, but it was a distraction.

Two years after Kaylee died, we were blessed with another baby. A baby boy who looked just like his sister but had a personality very much his own. I found joy again doing things with Timmy that I used to do with his sister. We started to celebrate holidays and birthdays again. After all, he was entitled to experience all the happiness his sister had. We have always talked about Kaylee and as

my son got older, he would acknowledge that he had a sister "who is in Heaven." It made me very proud and sad at the same time. After all, he should have his sister here with him.

As the years passed, we started traditions to honor and celebrate our daughter's life. On her birthday, I pick Timmy up from school early and he picks out balloons and a little stuffed animal to bring to the cemetery. One balloon always gets tied to the chair on the porch where she had sat watching the neighborhood kids play and waiting to say hi to the mailman. We go to dinner at Kaylee's favorite restaurant, Friendly's. I think my son looks



forward to Kaylee's birthday just as much as his own! Her anniversary is a bit more somber. I allow myself that one day to sit in her room and look through all her photo albums and memory box, given to us from the nurses who took care of her in the hospital. We go to the cemetery,

reflect, and remember the little girl who brought us so much joy. Joy we once thought we would never experience again.

Kaylee will be gone 17 years...a lot longer than she was here, which bothers me, but I choose not to dwell on the negative but rather what losing her has taught me. It has made me stronger than I ever thought was possible. I no longer worry about the small stuff. If I can survive losing my child, I can get through any challenge in this life. I know the importance of being at all of my son's school functions, sporting events, and driving him to endless practices. I never had the chance to do those things for Kaylee.

Ladybugs have become my sign for my daughter. When I see one, I know in my heart she is near and always with me. Kaylee is still a part of our family. We used her savings bonds to buy our son a dog...a gift from his sister. He named the dog Kacey after Kaylee's initials (KC). My son wears the number 2 on his jersey for his sister because she was 2 when she died.... something he decided all on his own when he was young and first started playing sports. I share my story and my journey with other newly bereaved parents with the intention of providing some hope. Hope was all I had 17 years ago. It is possible to smile and laugh and find joy again even when it seems so far out of reach.

I remember hearing at a bereavement group early on in our grief journey "time will soften the

pain." I didn't believe it all those years ago, but I know it to be true now. Of course, I still have those days when the pain sneaks up on me and I think about all I have lost, all the memories and milestones I have been cheated out of. During those days I want to stay in bed and cry all day, but I don't. Instead, I think about how I was blessed to have been given my daughter, even though it was only for a short time. I wouldn't trade those 28 months I had with her for anything. The grief and pain of losing a child will always be with us but it won't always be so sharp.

As time moves on, we move forward. We learn how to honor and remember our child. As a bereaved parent it's our job to keep our child's memory alive. The best way we can honor our children is to learn to go on living while we keep them safely tucked within our hearts.

--Amy Conlon, Bethpage, NY

Newly Bereaved...

Newly Bereaved... Phantom Pains

This A.M. when I was in that half-awake, half-asleep stage, I was thinking about what it is like to have your child die. So many people that haven't lost a child cannot possibly understand. I thought of losing a child as being compared to losing one of our extremities. If you had your arm suddenly amputated you would go into extreme shock. There would be sooooo much pain for a long, long time. As that assaulting, excruciating pain eases, you learn to "get back into life", step by step, but it's a long process of rehabilitating yourself to learn to live without your arm.

You start to "get better" and then the phantom pains come and try to haunt you. Unexpectedly, without warning, there you are again in pain, except now people don't understand your pain as well as they once did. So you feel guilty for feeling this phantom pain. There are some friends out there who are more wise and do understand about the phantom pains and will still love and be there with you. Others will leave.

Your hand itches but you can't scratch it. It's not there. The longing to hold your child is there, it's real, but you can't hold your child again while we are still here.

Some unwise people will tell you, "You have



other children." Yes, you love your other children just as you love your other arm and legs, but they can't take the place of the one you lost. We, as parents who have had a child die, have had part of us amputated. They were born out of us, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, carried in our wombs, and nurtured at our breasts. And even those who have been adopted into our lives and knitted into our very souls. So, how can the death of a child even be related to the death of a father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, or friend. These are great losses, but having our child die is having part of us taken away.

The grief is different; it's not "normal." We are supposed to die before our children. Then, I thought about the amputated arm. If that wound isn't cleansed and lovingly taken care of, it will become infected. Bitterness and anger (which are normal in grief) can lead to an infection in your soul if you get struck in it and it is not dealt with. Friends can be loving healers helping to bind up the wound, or they can rip open the wound, making it deeper, by insensitive remarks due to a lack of understanding.

We are all at different stages in our journey through this loss and hopefully are healing. But there will always be a part of us that is gone until we are in heaven with them. We will get the phantom pains, but we can make a choice each day to go through the pain until we find some hope for our weary souls. We will never be the same, but we can survive and maybe we will even turn out to be better people, more in-tune with others. Become "wounded healers." We are already more gifted than a lot of other people in this world because we KNOW what it is to truly love our child.

There are a lot of people out there who take their children for granted, just as a lot of us have taken for granted that it is normal to have two arms and two legs. But what if that were different . . . ?

--Carol Mudra, Walnut, California.

From Prodigy Medical Support Bulletin Board/
Death of a Child

Seasoned Grievers...

Hope

Last month the first holiday catalog was deposited in my mailbox, "So early," I thought, with tired resignation and more than a little resentment. The catalog unmistakably heralded the approach of the season of good cheer, and somehow I would

have to get through it. It meant weeks of feeling like a despondent bystander as the world cloaked itself with bright trappings of love, joy, and goodwill toward men.

I was a bereaved parent, and I would spend yet another holiday caught up in the anguish of *remembering*... With the catalog indifferently grasped in my hand I sat down in the kitchen, my heart heavy. My thoughts drifted back to last year's holiday, and I again saw my husband's melancholy face as he plaintively asked if we could put up just a *small* tree. I agreed only because it seemed important to him. It would be the first time since the death of our daughter that holiday decorations would grace our home. I had felt no joy, no solace when I looked at that tiny, glowing tree, but it was a huge relief not to feel the overwhelming pain I expected.

It had been the fourth holiday season without Tracey. I sat in the kitchen, slowly turning the catalog's pages. I was so lost in thought I scarcely saw what was in front of me. Last year the mailman had delivered greeting cards and best-wishes-for-the-season cards, as always. I had opened some with appreciation; others, the ones I knew would ignore our heartache, I tore open almost savagely. I had mailed my own greeting cards to many of these same people, and as had become my custom each card was sent in memory of our daughter. It was the only way to manage the pain of a task I once loved.

I found myself absently leafing through the last of the pages. Though absorbed in my reminisces I had carefully avoided looking at the many pages of toy offerings – I knew I would pay a painful emotional price if I lingered there. Children's clothing had to be desperately rushed by as well (though my well-trained eye caught the words "girl's size fourteen" and stopped despite all I could do...*oh, Tracey*). House wares were fairly safe though uninteresting, and these last pages depicted a wide variety of novelty items. A pair of butterfly earrings captured my attention, turning my thoughts immediately to one of my Compassionate Friends – a truly loving friend – who adored butterflies.

"I could order these as a gift for her," I thought, and the idea startled me. With the notable exception of the painful purchase of a toy last year for my beloved daughter, I had not sought out a gift for anyone since her death. As the thought took root and began to flourish I felt my heart, so long frozen with grief, begin to warm. Cautiously I

pondered these emerging feelings. Was I ready for this? I was astonished to feel the ice encasing my heart begin to melt; emboldened by the warm feelings of caring spreading through me. I looked more closely at the remaining pages of the catalog. There! Another small item I was sure a second dear TCF friend would like. I found myself actually enjoying filling out the order form for both items. Enjoying???? Did I really use that Word? Had the pain and uncompromising grief, always intensified at holiday time, abated somewhat? Was I truly feeling lighter, more able to cope? Did this mean, *could* it mean that I might one day step back into the world when it donned its festive mantle?

I knew as I sat there I would always deeply love and ferociously miss my child...and I knew that grief would forever be a part of my life. Understanding that, might it still be possible to allow a small amount of holiday spirit to trickle into my life this year?

I think just for today I'll hold onto that possibility, because today it seems I can imagine a less painful tomorrow. Today my heart contains a bit of warmth. It feels good.

-- Sally Migliaccio TCF Babylon, NY

For Friends And Family...

Emptiness

All I feel is emptiness
in body, mind and soul.
Nothing possibly could
change, repair me, make me whole.
They say this pain will lessen,
that in time I will find peace,
that these mighty waves of anguish
will someday lighten, cease.
But now their words don't soothe me.
My mind is screaming so,
I can't see reason, meaning.
My bleeding heart cries "No!"
My life just seems a burden
filled with tragedy and loss
and I cannot make the effort
or pay the price it costs.
They say this pain will lessen.
they talk to me of peace.
But this darkness is so heavy,
my only hope – release.
Will this emptiness devour me?
Existence feels so bleak.
To give my life new meaning,



I know not what I seek.

--Genesse Gentry, "Stars In The Deepest Night"

Book Review...



Not Just Another Day by Missy Lowery. Covers the more common holidays and gives good ideas for including the children in celebrating birthdays and Christmas. Includes a list of things to do to take care of yourself for this month.

Helpful Hint...



"I was shocked that I did not die from grief. And I know now that I will not die from it, because I choose not to. I may run, or shake wildly, or lie paralyzed on the ground for a while, but I will not ultimately succumb"

-- Molly Fumia, "Safe Passage"

Welcome...



We Welcome You with Compassion, Love and Hope

It is always difficult to say "welcome" to those coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason they came. For some, the first meeting or two can be rather overwhelming, especially for the newly bereaved. We hope that anyone feeling that way will return to at least a couple more of our meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend regardless of the age at which their child died or the length of time that has passed since that day.



14th. Join us as friends and family around the globe light a candles for one hour to honor and remember children who have died at any age and from any cause. Candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, creating a virtual wave of light, as hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of children in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious, and political boundaries.

The World Wide Candle Lighting...

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held annually the second Sunday in December, this year on December

Our Chapter's Candle Lighting...

Friends and family are invited to join us. Because our regular meeting site is unavailable on the 14th, we will be holding our Candle Lighting Event at American Martyrs OLMM Room 1431 Deegan Pl Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. Candles will be provided.

Leo has volunteered to create a slide show of all our children to play during the ceremony. Find a picture of your child that you would like to be shown. Send photos (max 3) to his email at liccica79@gmail.com Write "Candlelight Photo" in Subject line. Provide name of child, year born and died, name of parents. You may also submit a poem or a song request. Leo will work it into the program of possible. The **Deadline** to be included in the slide show is **December 5th**.

The event will **start at 6:30**. The actual **Candle lighting is at 7**. For those wishing to read a poem in memory of their child, bring it with you. We will also have copies of poems available from previous events that you can customize as a tribute to your child. Your contributions of finger foods for after the ceremony are welcomed. Drinks will be provided. Since space may be limited, we ask families to indicate how many will attend when submitting their photos.

Only December

Feelings heavy, tears and tears.
Will the darkness last?
Or is it? only December?
Hadn't past months brought peace and hope?
Where is the strength of October?
and November?

Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,
cards from friends,
happy times in seasons past.
We remember. We remember.
Will January bring light at last?
Will we be stronger then,
for making it through this December?
When people ask
how I'm doing, I say,
Well.....you know....
it's December.

--Genesse Boudreau Gentry

**Our Children Remembered**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Our Children**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Remembered

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 &
Cydney 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 Lauhere
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96
Parents: Larry & Chris
Lauhere

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Our****Children****Remembered**

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
Match
Born: 5/02 Died: 7/18
Parents: Mike & Shirley
Match, Grandmother:
Dorothy Match

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: Desireé 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

**Our Children**

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

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

Remembered

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
Szcus

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



Our Children Remembered



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/Anniversary Tributes...

In honor of your child's birthday or anniversary, we welcome you to submit a tribute. Birthday and Anniversary tributes show how important our children still are to all of us. 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 or anniversary donations that help offset chapter expenses.)

Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month

By Siblings...



A Holiday Reminder

Of course the holidays are known as "the most wonderful time of the year," but missing a loved one that has passed on, may not feel quite as wonderful. Any feelings that you may have are completely normal. There's no correct way to feel and we cannot control the pain that we have endured. Allow yourself to feel the emotions you are going through.

There are no rules for celebrating the holidays. Honor and remember your loved ones how you need to, and do what's best for you and for your heart. Remember you are missing a huge piece of you, so do what you need to do during this time of year.

--Christina DiPalma, Bella's Sister

A Holiday To Do List:

As a reflection back on the past 13 (Wow! has it really been that long?!) Christmases, I would like to share some ways that I have handled the holidays, as well as some additional thoughts. This time of the year is bittersweet for me now, as opposed to the first Christmas without my older brother, David. That was the worst. At any rate, I can handle November and December much better now. I suppose I've learned a little along the way, and gained strength each year. Nonetheless, the anniversary of his death always gets to me. Unfortunately, it falls between Thanksgiving and Christmas on December 9th.

Here's my list of suggestions for honoring a sibling whom you have lost, and on simply making it through yourself:

1. Hang that stocking. Go ahead. Put up your sibling's stocking. It isn't as though your brother or sister never existed, and isn't still a part of your life.
2. Write a poem or letter to your sibling and put it in the stocking.
3. Put up a tree, or continue with your holiday traditions. Yes, this is VERY difficult. But for most of our siblings, this was their favorite time of year. Celebrate how blessed you have been to have had your sister or brother for holidays past. Decorate the way THEY would have wanted to, instead of the way you would do it.
4. Create a "memory" box. This is simply a box of

belongings from your sibling, or pictures of your sibling, etc. Wrap it in festive holiday paper, and put it under your tree if you have one.

5. Buy a gift for your sibling. Maybe it is something they truly would have wanted for the holidays, maybe it's something the two of you would have enjoyed together or gotten a good laugh out of. This can be VERY therapeutic.

6. Go somewhere that your sibling would have wanted to go to— the beach, a movie they would have liked, a favorite restaurant, wherever. "Share" this time with your sibling. This is also good on their birthday. Celebrate that they had a life and that they are a part of yours!

7. Bake a favorite holiday goody of your sibling's.

8. Get together with your family and cry (and LAUGH – it's OK to do this) at some great family memories from years past that involved your sibling. Share thoughts on great places you may have visited for the holidays, or anecdotes of you and your sibling trying to peek at what your gifts were ahead of time.

9. Put together a photo album of your sibling. This could be of your sibling's life in general, or of a specific subject, like the sport your sibling played, or holidays past.

10. Give your album to your parents. Cry (and LAUGH!) at the pictures and the memories they generate.

I hope that you are blessed this holiday season, and that my suggestions are helpful. Please know that the holidays get easier with time, and that you WILL make it through, even though it may seem impossible.

--Amy Baker Ferry TCF Heart of Florida Chapter
In loving memory of my brother, David

For Grandparents...



Becoming Melancholy: How My Grandson's Death Changed the Way I Live

Posted on September 24th, 2024

I continue to learn and grow as this new person I have become, a griever making my re-entry back into life among those untouched by loss. In adjusting to the new me, I have come to accept things about myself that at first I assumed were temporary. I now know that I am permanently changed.

Self-awareness is a good thing. If grief has provided anything positive, it would be the soul-searching that I needed to do in order to overcome my loss. Grief shatters you, tears you

apart. Rips open your soul, breaks your heart and forces you to open your eyes. When I was able to put myself back together, I found my perception of everything had been completely altered.

Grief makes you aware, hyper-aware. You become more of who you really are and you see the truth of who others are as well.

In this new state of being I tend to over analyze everything. Not to be weighed as right or wrong or to judge, but to prevent the mental unrest that may unintentionally harm my fragile psyche.

I find myself living a life mostly melancholy. Although I have consistently tried to resume an overtly happy life, I now realize this was also misguided. There is absolutely nothing wrong with living my life the way I am. It is not a dishonor to Konnor to be sad at times. I am, in fact, honoring him when I have moments of sadness because I am expressing my love for him. To continue to falsely create a facade of a life that does not exist would be a mockery.

I am doing much better than I was. I am, for the most part, happier now. I can laugh when something is funny. I smile more. For this I feel proud considering where I was two years ago. I am settling into myself, content in who I am. Shaped by grief but surviving by my love for my family and everything that is left in the here and now.

Grieving and feeling melancholy has turned me into a deeply emotional human being. Some handle loss well and manage to go unscathed. For me, the changes I have felt within myself are irrevocable. I am emotional. I am aware. I am more alive now having experienced the trauma of death.

I am blessed to experience a sunrise, my grandchildren, a beautiful song. It doesn't bother me to feel everything so deeply. So what if I cry more than the average person. I get melancholy. I know what it means to lose someone I treasured and thought so beautiful.

Being melancholy does not mean I am depressed or sad. It is not a mood. It is a state of being. It is loving your family more. It is recognizing beauty unnoticed before. It is hearing a song and crying because it brings forth a memory whether good or bad. It is a feeling of stillness, fullness while at the same time experiencing emptiness, numbness. Melancholy is staring off into space, lost in your own thoughts in a room full of people. It's that lump in your throat and the ache in your chest.

I have adjusted to the overwhelming emotions I can experience. I am comfortable with who I have become. Truth be told, I would rather feel so much more than care less in a world that at times can seem so cold.

--Patricia Mealer Grandmother to Konnor Mason, who passed suddenly Nov. 22, 2015, at eight years old.

From Our Members...

To Our Members



"Our heart knows there will be no more new memories, that is why we hold and cherish those we have so dearly. It is the love remembered that gives us hope in the midst of our sorrow." —Marie Hofmockel

This is so true...Attending events that honor our child's memory is one of the things we can do that at least come close to a "new memory." Originally I thought that going to a pot-luck, balloon liftoff or worldwide candle lighting was silly. Why would I try to convince myself it would be something I could enjoy? Or that it could help my family or even me in my grief journey. It would be easier to make an excuse and stay home. Why go through the effort?

Well, guess what. I was WRONG! I found that it gave my other children and family members a place they could express their continued love for my son. In a non judgmental way, everyone who went soaked up a small bit of empathy for what bereaved families go through. It was a safe environment that they could partake in that screamed "You're not alone.... we understand. Our children are just as loved and missed as yours are and we found a new inner strength by joining you and remembering together. It became a true opposite of "aren't you over it?" I'm so glad I gave it a try.

-- Lynn Vines, Eric's Mom

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 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 & Anniversary 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: Dec. first for Jan. 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 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 (chpt. 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
survivorsofselfharm.com	alivewith.com
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 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

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Connie & Leo Licciardone
Sandra & Eddie Myricks
Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

Kitty Edler
Susan Kass

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

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

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

Please Consider A Year-end Donation...

FOUR OPTIONS TO GIVE

- CASH (Meetings only)
- QR Code via cell phone
- Online at tcfabla.org/donate-now/
- Checks by mail:

The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A.
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171

- Include note with child's name and donor information



SCAN ME



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

In loving memory of all our children. December and holidays are a reminder of what we have lost, but also of what remains in our hearts. With mixed emotions we will acknowledge and try to balance the sadness of your death with the beautiful memories of our past celebrations. How ever you choose to remember your loved one, we wish you all a peaceful holiday. ~ TCFSBLA

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



December 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.