



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Jan. 2026 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING:
will be Jan. 8th, the SECOND
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 Jan. 8th meeting will start with **"Making Choices in the New Year"**. ❖ ***Due to the holiday we will meet JAN 8TH*** ❖

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 place to talk about your grief every Friday from 1-3. We meet at different locations each week so call to let us know you are coming. Everyone pays for their own lunch so arrival times & locations are flexible. Please call (310) 963-4646 for more information.

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

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The **Thursday Jan 8th** meeting will start with with **“Making Choices in the New Year”**. We have many choices to make in finding ways to go on and lead a full life again after the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. While you may feel you are going to feel this bad forever, you will not. You may feel its disrespectful to your child to not mourn forever, that your life no longer matters because you couldn't keep your loved one safe and alive no matter what. Well, it DOES matter! We invite you to join us as we explore different ways we process our losses and what choices are necessary to overcome loss and experience a full life again.

January and the Bereaved

For now, the holidays are over, and once again a New Year faces us. What choices will we make for our healing this year? The road of grief is hard, and the pain terrible to bear. We must try to face the New Year with the thought that we will not always be in this much pain. As we make choices each year, we will realize that the pain has eased and become more familiar with each choice.

We will never be totally without the pain of loss and shattered dreams but we will be able to live again with hope for the future. We can make the choice that the love that is stored in each of us for our missing children can be spread out to others to help them with their pain and in doing so, we will realize it is also helping to ease our own pain.

Self-care is mandatory to overcome the death of a child. We need to consciously choose to work on our grief when we can and when it becomes too overwhelming, we can choose to take a break from mourning. Our children would want us to move on and they would expect us to try and live a healthy normal life again!

To facilitate healing, we can make time to read, attend meetings, phone a friend, cry, walk, eat healthier, and in general focus on ourselves and what the reality of our loss means to each of us.

We may have to learn what works best for us by trial and error. As we make our own paths through grief we may choose;

* to try and take it one day at a time, and not to set our expectations too high.

* to figure out ways to resolve your anger so you can let go of it.

* to forgive yourself for whatever you may feel you did wrong. All these doubts haunt the majority of us, whether they are true or not.

* to concentrate on and value what you have left,

as much as what you have lost;

* to let those you value know how important they are to you.

* to risk reinvestment in life and in love for others.

These are important steps forward after a child dies... Steps that we can choose to make because our children lived.

–Lynn Vines, TCF So Bay/LA, CA

The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much has changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help ourselves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief. We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope for another day.

There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief. Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us.

This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way. Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this plane with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears. The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy.

An often unexpressed fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your



child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories.... sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find that your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

--Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF, Katy, TX

What is Time?

Our perception of life is often based on time, divided into past, present, and future moments, measured in hours, days, months, and years. On December 20th, 2011, all-time measurements stopped for me, freezing me at that very moment. My beautiful 27-year-old daughter was killed in a car accident. A texting transport truck driver hit the vehicle she was a passenger in. Andrea was removed from my life in seconds, instantly, they said.

The destruction of my past, present, and future is indescribable. How the minutes, hours, days, months, and years pushed me to where I am today is something I will never comprehend. The profound impact of child loss leaves a ball of grief that will take a lifetime to unravel.

The changes that happen teach us that we are not the same person. Mentally, our confidence and security of life are entirely demolished. Some days, I feel empty, and some days full. Some days, I scream so loud my throat hurts; some days, I smile and laugh without guilt. Most days, I experience depression on some level. The sadness goes deep into my soul, and I am learning to live with it.

I have lived with triggers, insomnia, anxiety, and much more. Living with the unpredictability of grief is preparing the shattered heart to accommodate life again. Eventually, the love for our child pushes the pain aside, allowing some joy to enter.

The passage of time is necessary for healing but it is painful. Time becomes our teacher and our

friend as we learn to cope over and over again. It is the only thing that can allow the sharp edges of grief to become dull and with less intensity. Yes, the broken heart with all the sharp edges will piece together, and grief and love will co-exist. I never knew it could happen, but it does.

My daughter loved mosaics. She was creative and talked about making a table from broken ceramic pieces. She could look beyond the brokenness and see the possibilities of beauty. As I walk this journey, I have learned to take the crushed pieces of my broken heart and make something unique and beautiful. As we re-adjust, reconnect, and rebuild our new life piece by piece, smiles, and happiness will happen. The meaning is different and feels different because we are new people. For all parents on this road, our life is divided forever into the before when our child was here, and the now without their physical presence.

We need to embrace the precious gift of time. How do we do this? Today is the only segment of time in our hands that we can control. Living in these moments requires one to make a conscious effort to shift the grief aside momentarily. What we do with the minutes and hours is within our control and determines the essence of that time. By creating a mind set of the present-time, we open ourselves up to let life enter, whether through a connection with nature or the company of family or friends. Smiles or sunshine will move us forward in honor of our child.

Cherishing memories is easier said than done with a broken heart, but it is necessary. Tomorrow is waiting because yesterday existed. Memories are connected with many things. Photographs, sounds, smells, colors, music, or events remind us of our beautiful child. The tears and smiles will take us to that moment when happiness and joy existed. It is difficult to see beyond sorrow, but eventually, memories will ease our lives. Amid the darkness, the memories that feel suffocating will partner with the love, providing courage and energy to continue. We must preserve the memories tightly within our hearts and minds, for they give honor to and keep our children alive.

The eternal love and bond with our child are our beacon of shining hope. Love is the highest energy source, and it is untouched by death. As we step into tomorrow and the unknown, we must embrace the moments, cherish the memories, and cling to hope that tomorrow will be better. We have been blessed with a permanent love and connection with our child. As we reconcile with life, we will move



further away from the darkness of grief to hope and see a brighter tomorrow. We will always be their parent and the only vessel for their voice now.

Sometimes, we have to let faith lead us even though the destination is unknown because that is what faith is. I have decided to honor my Andrea the best I can for her. I will tell the world our story of love and honor her every day. I have written a book about my journey of loss and grief.

For today, try to measure the moments of life with love, not pain. Grief sometimes needs space, but I will not let it consume me because love never fails.

--Linda Henderson

This Life

During my daughter's birth something went wrong. I had been in labor for a reasonable amount of time, and everything was progressing properly when suddenly, the doctor announced that the baby was not happy where she was and needed to be gotten out immediately. I do not remember everything. I remember severe labor pain. I remember something about forceps. I remember that she did not move or breathe. I remember they intubated her and took her away to a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. I remember terror. This was how my daughter's life began in October 1994. This was how my life as a mother began.

We were able to bring Lueza home from the hospital twelve days later. We knew she had seizures at some point and had been prescribed phenobarbital to stop the seizures. She slept most of the time in the NICU because of the drug but was weaning off it as the days went by. She had started nursing. We were hopeful that it was just a scary birth, and everything would be fine. We had scheduled a follow-up appointment with a neurologist a few weeks later. We left the hospital with our daughter on a beautiful October afternoon and walked to my parents' apartment a few blocks away. We did not leave for nine months.

Everything was not fine. Lueza had sustained significant brain damage. She developed a new kind of seizure a few months later called Infantile Spasms and went back on anti-epileptic medication. When that medication did not resolve her seizures, she was prescribed a treatment of ACTH, which required twice daily intramuscular injections into her upper legs. My husband immediately stepped forward to learn how to do this as I felt incapable.



Just writing these words is hard. It brings back all the memories of those early days.

The feelings were grief and terror. I had the feeling that life had been ruined. Our baby had been severely injured on the day of her birth and we were all ruined. But we were not alone.

We were living with my parents. My mother would hold Lueza and sing to her when we were having a bad night. We would watch Seinfeld with my parents on Thursday evenings. They took care of us. My mother cooked us dinners. They loved Lueza. They comforted us.

For the longest time in those early months, it was hope that got me through the days. The hope that she would catch up. The doctors and therapists kept using the word delay. Lueza's motor development is delayed. In my mind that meant that she would eventually be okay. It might take a little longer to walk and talk but it would all work out.

And one day I was watching Lueza looking around as she lay on her back, and I asked my husband if she would always be lying down. He said: she may be lying down but she may be very happy.

I know that memory is a tricky thing, but I remember clearly that his words went straight through me. She may be very happy. And she was. Very happy.

Little by little I was able to give up all hope of what she would be able to do or not do and realize that she had the miracle of a joyful spirit. Lueza was happy. She loved us. She loved life. She loved her younger sister Dora.

We finally figured out her way of saying yes and no. She couldn't speak but she was able to make a sound like aye as she turned her head to the right for a yes and a slight shake of the head for no as she lay on her back.

Lueza loved the Matterhorn roller coaster at Disneyland. She loved the rides Jurassic Park and Back to the Future at Universal Studios. She loved watching movies.

Lueza did not care that she traveled by wheelchair or could not speak. She was happy lying down. Of course, there were tears and frustration when she could not explain what was wrong, but we would eventually figure it out with yes and no questions.

Her happiness let me accept the reality of her situation. Yes, she was severely physically disabled but she was HAPPY. We found amazing schools for her with teachers that loved her and

were excited for what she could learn.

Of course, at a certain point I realized how vulnerable her lungs would become and we had to face the reality of her medical fragility. I knew what was coming before we would ever be ready.

When Lueza started having frequent hospitalizations for aspiration pneumonia she was about thirteen years old. It is hard for me to write about. I was thinking about death a lot. It was a coping mechanism for me. Maybe if I worried about it constantly, I could keep her safe.

Being in reality about her situation made every day precious. She was with us. She was happy. We were okay.

Lueza died when she was sixteen. Yes, she was medically fragile, but it was shocking. Shocking and devastating. We are all together in this at The Compassionate Friends. We have all been through this dreadful day.

We grieve as we can and remember joy and lives full of everything. We find our way. For me it was writing. Writing and remembering her extraordinary and precious life.

We are all together in this. Remembering what we had and what we will always have... Love.

—Author unknown

Joanne Marie & Elizabeth Marie Gillis

The newsletter covers many aspects of the subject which deals with the loss of our precious

loved ones. I would like to submit the following letter because I HOPE it may be of benefit to any parent who is deciding whether to have another baby or not. This letter was written on the 10th October, 2004, which is Joanne Marie's 24th year in Heaven. The 29th October, 2004 is "Baby" Beth's 19th year in Heaven.

On the 24th May, 1975, a delicate, sweet baby girl traveled alone from the dark, isolated place (the womb) to the welcoming and receptive cuddles of her parents Gavin Phillip and Jan Marie Gillis. This baby girl was named Joanne Marie and her parents were loving and kind but poor due to expensive home loan repayments. Joanne was well nurtured but rarely experienced luxury.

Joanne Marie was a content baby and a very well behaved toddler and very fortunately for her parents Joanne was rarely ill and only had one serious accident in her short life.

On the 12th November, 1976, a delicate, sweet baby boy joined our family and his name is Matthew Phillip. Joanne Marie enjoyed the friendship and company of her brother. Matthew Phillip was a sickly baby and a toddler who was very accident prone. Matthew managed to fracture his skull several times and was x-rayed for skull fractures four times before the age of five and the Mater Children's Hospital's doctor said we would be ordered to make Matthew wear a safety helmet if he should return for another skull x-ray because it was a danger for him to have continuous skull x-rays. We were always worried that Matthew was not going to live to see his teenage years.

On the 10th October, 1980 Joanne Marie traveled alone, once again, to a distant, destination, heaven, never to return to cuddle her loving Mama, Daddy and brother. To save you working it out, Joanne Marie went to Heaven, 32 days before Matthew's 4th birthday and incidentally 24 days before my 28th birthday, 4th November, 1952. I have never enjoyed a single birthday since 10.10.80. However, because of my long standing sorrow and so-called depression I unintentionally ruined every one of Matthew's birthdays since his 3rd birthday. Matthew's 4th birthday and my 28th birthday DON'T register anywhere in my memory bank and nor do the following year's birthdays.

Joanne Marie's demise was pneumonia septicemia but the doctors' initial suspicion was meningitis so as a precaution everyone who had had close contact with Joanne was advised to have a test to clear them. However, we had to rush Matthew to the hospital within hours of losing Joanne because the doctors were worried that we were going to lose Matthew as well.

On the 1st March, 1982, a delicate, sweet baby boy joined our family and his name is Douglas Phillip. Douglas was also constantly ill during his infant years and toddler years. It was discovered through many medical tests that he had Chemotaxin disorder which meant that his white blood cells didn't multiply quickly enough to combat certain infections and in Douglas's case it was pneumonia which nearly took his life several times. It was now that we finally discovered that Matthew also had Chemotaxin disorder which explained all his sickness during his infancy. Now try to imagine how difficult it was to even think of having another baby and to know that if the baby was a boy then it was highly likely that he too would have Chemotaxin disorder! However, Dr Wood



was a specialist in blood disorders and he said that if he and his wife were in our position then they would take the chance because the baby could be a girl who had no problem.

On 29th October, 1985 "Baby" Beth, Elizabeth Marie was stillborn at nearly 6 months gestation. Somehow I managed to find the courage and strength to go through another pregnancy? A delicate, sweet baby girl, Bellettia Eileen was born 17th February, 1987. I breast-fed Bellettia until she was 2 years and 3 months old because I loved her and because I was too fearful to face the possibility that she had Chemotaxin disorder so I would not let her have the blood test. Today is the 10.10.2004 and I am writing this message to all the parents and family members of "Lost Loved Ones" because the circle of birthdays has come full circle because my Matthew Phillip and his wife Sarah are due to have their first baby in March, 2005. Matthew turns 28 and I turn 52 in November.

I do not go to church on a regular basis and I have to admit that quite often I am very upset with God about different issues but "My Hat Goes Off to God" for blessing our family with this wonderful surprise. I'll let you know in March, in fact I'll probably let the whole world know, what is my first grandchild's birth date and name. (I wonder how much the sky-writers are?).

--By Jan Marie Gillis, in memory of her daughters

Newly Bereaved...

Guilt: It's What Our Brain Does

After your loved one died, did you find yourself saying things such as: I should've, I shouldn't have, If only, I wish I would've, or Why didn't I? If so, you are part of a very large group of humans who have felt guilty following a death. It doesn't matter whether the death took place thousands of miles away or in your home. It matters less whether your loved one died in an accident, in a war setting, or due to an internal war. What matters is that this precious person is no longer in your life.

You awaken each day with the harsh realization that the worst has happened. Your future looks uncertain. Those around try to help, but your grief is a dizzying array of emotions and thoughts. And one of the most common emotions

of grief is guilt. As we examine this grief reaction, the most important fact to keep in mind is that guilt is a feeling. You cannot talk someone out of a feeling. That's why, when people say, "Don't feel guilty," we don't respond with, "OK, thanks. I feel much better now." Next, let's look at types of guilt and suggestions for coping with it. See if any of these apply to you.

TYPES OF GUILT

Survivor guilt: You feel guilty because you are alive and your loved one is not. Or you think it should have been you who died instead of your loved one.

Benefit guilt: Did money come to you following the death? If you received any sort of benefit, guilt will raise its financial head.

Role-failure guilt: You look back on your life and feel bad because you weren't a good enough spouse/parent/sibling/grandparent/friend/relative. When a death occurs, your brain goes back into the past and reviews all the events and interactions with the person who died. It's easy to dwell on all the past wrongs.

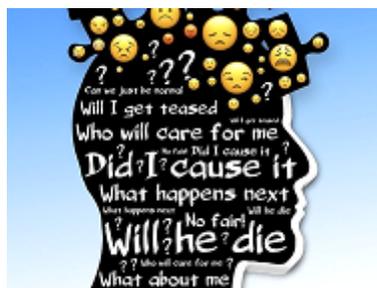
Death-causation guilt: Although you didn't directly cause the death, you may have felt that you should have or could have done something—anything—to prevent the death. If so, you are experiencing death-causation guilt.

Grief guilt: Have you somehow felt that you weren't grieving right: crying enough, angry enough, sad enough, tough enough? Or perhaps you felt that you were crying too much or overly angry or too depressed or weak. Remember, you grieve however you grieve. There is absolutely no right or wrong way.

Moving-on guilt: Have you laughed again? Done things for pleasure? Gotten involved in new activities? Have you felt guilty about it? This is one of the most significant challenges in coping with a death. After someone we love dies, we still get out of bed (even though we may not feel like it). Time keeps moving and suddenly it's a month. You know when it's been exactly a month because that date has been forever etched in your brain. Months turn into years and you realize that you have no choice but to live your life, even though it's not the one you wanted. Time has forced you to move on. You realize that moving on does not mean forgetting. You will never forget the life this wonderful person lived. But time has moved you forward and guilt arises.

COPING WITH GUILT

Let's look next at some suggestions for coping



with guilt. These suggestions came from bereaved people themselves. For my book *Understanding Guilt During Bereavement*, I asked many people what helped them in coping with guilt following the death of their loved one. Here is what they said:

Educate yourself: By reading this article you have taken a step toward making a little more sense of your guilt.

Watch your self-talk: For a time, go ahead and beat yourself up with the should have and if only thoughts. But pick a date in the future, such as the birthday of your loved one and make a decision to cease using these negative terms. When you start to say, "I should've" catch yourself by saying, "Okay, stop this kind of talk." Consider it a gift from your loved one.

Compile memories: Write stories or record them on a voice recorder or video. It can be called "I remember the time when..." Contact friends and relatives to ask them for stories, pictures, and videos of your loved one.

Forgive yourself: At various times during the week, ask yourself, "What would it take for me to begin to forgive myself?" Write a list of all you did wrong and all you did right: It is important to get all the things you feel guilty about out of your head and onto paper. It's easy to beat yourself up for the negatives, but you also need to look at the positives.

Perform a guilt ritual: In a workshop I presented at the TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) conference for families who's loved one died in the military, I passed out small, polished rocks to each participant, telling them it was their guilt rock. They were to take it home and, as time went by and they began to feel less guilt, they moved the rock further away until they could finally throw it away. Another example of a guilt ritual was shared by a TAPS mother whose support group used a guilt candle. She thought about the guilt she felt for letting her son join the military, and when she blew out the candle, it felt like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders.

Find individual or group support: If you have found that your guilt and your grief are interfering with your ability to work on your activities of daily living, finding a counselor who understands grief and loss may help. Some people have discovered that a support group, such as TAPS where people share feelings of grief and suggestions for coping with it, has been the best thing they've done for themselves since the death occurred. Many

people have said to me, "Bob, without TAPS, I don't know where I'd be today. It saved my life."

Create a chat with your loved one: This is an exercise some people find difficult to do. Put down this magazine for a minute and do the following: imagine that your loved one is going to visit you for 20 seconds and say something to you about all the guilt you've been feeling since the death. Imagine that this person is standing in front of you. Listen. Go ahead, do this now. What words do you hear? Next, take out a pen and paper and write down those words. Understand that these words are a gift that this person has given to you. Accept the gift.

Channel your guilt: One way people cope with the guilt and anger over the death of a loved one is to channel it into a worthwhile project. Ask yourself, "What can I do now to help others in the name of my loved one?"

Guilt is a natural reaction to a significant loss. As the years go on, you may find that guilt may still pay you a visit. Guilt feelings are our brain's way of attempting to make sense of something that defies logic. I hope you will find something in this article to give you insight into the types of guilt and tools for coping with it. I wish you a life filled with little guilt and many positive memories of the life this person lived.

--Bob Baugher Dr. Bob Baugher is a psychologist and certified death educator who teaches at Highline College in Des Moines, WA.

Seasoned Grievors...

HOPE

It's weird as I utter the words "I am happy." I pause for a second, take a breathe and say to myself "it's okay to be happy". I use to feel so guilty if I even uttered a

smile those first few years after Brian died. I know that's very normal in child loss. I didn't know it then. But I earned the right to be happy. It's a very different type of happy, of course, but seeing as though I thought I never feel that emotion again, I will take it in its current form. I turned 40 on Jan 18, 2014 and 10 months later Brian would die in a car accident. I spent the first few years of my 40's in complete survival mode. I truly mean survival mode by not dying by my own hand or death by drowning myself in alcohol to numb a pain most



could never understand. My heart literally felt like it would give up on me and I die from a broken heart. Faking to be "ok" was exhausting. The following years after that I began working on my healing, trying to embrace my life and what that looked like without Brian here. The light had broken through the darkness and I could see in color again, although grey remains. Grief is hard never ending work. It's a journey that will always be. When early 2020 hit and the world stopped spinning as we all knew it, I began to really engage in life, within myself and what was around me. I was no longer "asleep". With that brand new discovery brought upon a new life that I wanted and needed for myself. I made a hard choice that August by wanting to be on my own, but I knew that was what was best for me. And the most valuable relationship I will ever have is with myself. The last two years have been filled with this new life where I found me again which also includes my grief and the waves that come along with it. I accept that my grief journey is forever. Brian is my son, how could it not be. I honor the woman I was pre-loss because she was f'ing awesome, but this new woman, she is unstoppable. My 40's were not what I had thought they would've been when I was standing a few rows back singing at Luke Bryan's concert in Tennessee that evening on the day I turned age 40. But I sit here today, the day of hope, reflecting on the past 7.5 years since Brian died, now age 48 and all I can say is Damn!! I AM SOMEHOW MAKING IT!!! AND SO WILL YOU!! #Hope #doitforbrian ♥ --LisaHeath

For Friends And Family...

Forever Changed

Can you see the change in me?
It may not be so obvious to you,
I participate in family activities,
I attend family reunions...
I help plan holiday meals.

You tell me you are glad to see that I don't cry anymore.

But I do cry! When everyone has gone – when it is safe – the tears fall.

I cry in privacy so my family won't worry.

I cry until I am exhausted and can finally sleep.

You tell me you admire my strength and my positive attitude.

But I am not strong, I feel that I have lost control;



and I panic when I think about tomorrow...

Next week... next year.

I go about the daily routine of my job, house work trying to complete my assigned tasks, not to feel the pain,

then I drink coffee and smile.

At times I think I am beginning to heal, but the pain rolls over me again with a permanent scar on my heart.

You tell me that you are glad to see I'm holding up so well.

But I'm not holding up well. Sometimes I want to lock the door and hide from the world.

I spend time with my parents, I seem calm and collected.

I smile when appropriate. But I'm not!

You tell me it's good to see me back to my "old self".

But I will never be back to my "old self".

Pain and grief, have touched my life... and I am Forever Changed!!

– Author unknown

The Compassionate Friends, Queensland Inc

Looking Forward...

Windows

We each have our own window to the world.

And each of us must decide whether to clean it daily or let today's problems add to yesterday's frustrations.

If we keep the window clean, we can wake to the bright light of new promises.

If we fail to do so, we will eventually be unable to see the beauty of hope and joy of faith that lie beneath the glass

--Frank Walsh



Helpful Hint...

Give Yourself Permission

It's okay to be afraid

of the things we don't understand

It's okay to feel anxious

when things aren't working our way

It's okay to feel lonely...

even when you're with other people.

It's okay to feel unfulfilled

because you know something is missing

(even if you're not sure what it is.)

It's okay to think and worry and cry
 It's okay to do whatever you have to do,
 but just remember, too..
 that eventually you're going to adjust
 to the changes life brings your way.
 and you'll realize that
 It's okay to love again and laugh again
 and it's okay to get to the point where
 the life you live is full
 and satisfying and good to you
 and it will be that way
 because you made it that way.
 --Laine Parsons, TCF Bradenton FL

Book In Review...



Grief Relief by Victor Parachin. This is a basic handbook for persons moving through the grief process. The author draws on a wide range of professional opinions and moving personal accounts. Of particular interest are chapters on helping children and getting through the holidays.

Welcome...



When you come to your first meeting of The Compassionate Friends, we ask that you attend at least three meetings before you decide if the group is for you. For many... the first meeting may also be the first time they've been able to talk about what has happened to them, their family and to their child. This can bring a lot of emotion to the forefront. Emotion which seems to disappear over the months as you talk about your loss.

Don't worry, we'll bring the tissues. Tears are a natural release for a grieving person and is a way to release stress due to grief.

If you're shy or unable to talk about your loss, you do not have to speak, although you will have the opportunity. Some people believe it's harder to talk in front of strangers about something as intimate as the loss of a child. But, because everyone else at the meeting has had a similar experience, they understand much of what you are feeling and you will eventually reach a comfort level with those you meet. A point to always keep in mind is that what is said in the meeting stays in the meeting. The privacy of our members is important. We're all there to work toward healing. It may be hard for you to believe, but occasionally you will hear laughter. This is not a dishonor to any child. Rather it is often a reaction to a wonderful memory

of a child.

The New Year

The New Year comes when all the world is ready for changes, resolutions - great beginnings. For us, to whom that stroke of midnight means a missing child remembered, For us, the New Year is more like another darkness.

But let us not forget that this may be the year when love and hope and courage find each other somewhere in the darkness to lift their voice and speak: Let there be light.

--Sasha Wagner

Dreams And Wishes

If there were a way
 we could turn back time ,
 To walk down the paths of yesterday
 and make our dreams reality
 I'd walk more slowly down those paths and gently
 Preserve their frailty,
 Live each day as if there were no tomorrow,
 Pause to savor each gentle memory.
 Kiss the dew and smell the flowers
 and cherish the quiet in the nighttime hours,
 Perhaps then I'd skip the sorrow,
 And life would take on a sweeter flavor.

--Marge Terrell TCF Hutchinson, KS

Golden Scrapbook

A treasure cache of memories
 A scrapbook in my mind
 A baby boy with big blue eyes
 A golden hair I find.
 A toddler grabbing marshmallows
 His little fist closed tight
 A first grader with brand new books
 Brave and proud and bright.
 A picture here — a feeling there
 I shuffle them together
 And sort them over constantly
 Although I know I'd rather
 Not have to search for memories
 But still I must— I find
 Add page on page on page on page
 To the golden scrapbook in my mind
 --Lois Gardner TCF, Grand Junction, CO

**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 Kropman
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12
Parents: Brenda & Greg
Kropman

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
Szucs

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

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

Jamie Taus
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21
Sister: Jackie Taus
Mother: Susan Taus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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... If it's your child's birthday month, we invite you to join our monthly meeting and share their story! Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings. TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life— a story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that our love continues.

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 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...



Siblings Speak

(22 years old)

Thanks for immediately telling me about what happened and the details of how, as soon as you knew. I needed to cry with you, and to cry alone. We all need to cry together, especially in the beginning of our grief. I needed your hugs to help me.

When you see people who resemble him, tell me so I don't think I'm a little crazy. The first year this happened often. Let me share my nightmares with you until they go away.

You helped me by asking me to help you. You helped me when you told me you were having trouble with the realization of his death. Talking about memories and what it was like when...is OK, but I'm here now and I need you to think about me.

It's selfish but necessary for me to feel needed, wanted and loved and near you. Understand that when I turn to my friends it's because I need to identify with them. I do talk to them about his death, more times than I talk to you. They're closer to my age and they help me to go on with my life.

When we talk, remember that he was my brother and we had our sibling rivalries and fights. He wasn't perfect, but neither am I. You helped me not to feel guilty about the fights we did have and told me he's forgiven me and I should forgive him, especially if I get mad because he died and left us.

(13 years old)

After my sister died, I hated God. I threw things around my room and cried an awful lot. My mother told me later it was my way of dealing with it and that it was okay and I was okay too!

Listed below are some helpful hints for parents:

- Let your children talk – express their feelings.
- Surround them with people – but familiar and

comforting people..

- Don't put the deceased child up on a pedestal while putting down your other children. Talk of your child but talk of good and bad memories – be realistic and don't think you have to make your child out to be a saint – stay in perspective.
- Hug your kids. They're going to be feeling guilty about ugly words or arguments they've had with their deceased sibling.
- Never tell your kids to be strong for somebody else. I don't know anyone who can be strong when their world is crashing down on them. Let your kids cry, scream, throw tantrums – this is the time for it.
- Be there for your kids. They'll need you at moments that you sometimes wouldn't expect. It might hurt you to talk about it but don't cut them off because that could lead to them holding it in.

Talking helped me to realize my feelings more. It helped me to get my feelings out in the open. At first it was hard to talk but as I got older it helped to talk. It brought us closer as a family. We realize each other's feelings and try to understand each other better now. I realize the importance of being nice. We don't know what might happen in the next hour or day.

--Author unknown

For Grandparents...



The Grief of Grandparents

There is no bond greater than the bond between parent and child. When a child dies, the pain of parental loss is near the top of the scale of human grief, and there is an immediate outpouring of sympathy and concern for the bereaved parents. But other grieving family members, including siblings, are often seen as secondary players who must provide support to the distraught parents. Among these forgotten grievers are the grandparents.

In many families, the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren are every bit as profound as those between parents and their children. The death of a grandchild also ranks high on the scale of human grief – but it is rarely acknowledged. There are few books or support groups addressing the grief of grandparents, and bereavement counselors who specialize in this kind of grief are rare.

Grandparents are usually left to cope as best they can. When a grandchild dies, the anguish of grandparents is doubled. Their grief for a son or daughter suffering this tragic loss only compounds

their pain at the loss of a beloved grandchild.

Grandparents who outlast a grandchild struggle with a death that seems out of order; they may cope with survival guilt, perhaps wondering why they couldn't have died instead. Moreover, a grandchild's death chips away at a grandparent's assumed legacy. Most of us hope to make a mark in the world, and the achievements of our children and grandchildren are a part of that dream. When one dies prematurely, that loss resonates through the generations, and like the bell in John Donne's poem – "it tolls for thee."

Many families are fractured by divorce, violence or mere inattention, and struggling single parents are hard pressed to provide the consistent and unconditional love that children need. Grandparents fill the role of the enduring presence, the ones who are available and who can be depended upon for affection and support.

The deep, nurturing love shared by many children and their grandparents is a bond that is extraordinarily painful when broken by death. It is a grief out-of-sight, but nonetheless powerful.

If you are a grandparent who has lost a grandchild, you have every reason to grieve deeply. Life is complex, and many of our fundamental questions have no apparent answer: Why do such bad things happen? What is the meaning of such pain? For now, your task is to mourn the death of this child and to take care of yourself as best as you can. If you want help, look for a book that addresses parental grief and substitute "grandparent" as you read. Perhaps your local hospice, faith community or mental health center has a support group for grieving grandparents. If not, ask them start one. There may be other grieving grandparents among your friends and neighbors, and you can share your common grief and mutual comfort.

Above all, be patient with yourself, and:

Don't try to suppress your grief. Stoicism won't work. Select the relatives or friends who give you comfort, and tell them how you feel.

Don't accept a comparison of your grief to that of others; grief is unique to each person

Take time off from your grief occasionally. Go visit a friend or take a short vacation at a place that you love.

The loss of a beloved grandchild is a severe blow, but avoid thinking that life has no more to offer. Some of the world's grandest music and literature were created out of personal tragedy. Find your own expression of your loss and your

search for meaning -- see if you can create your own requiem.

It is important that you find ways to fill the void in your life. The worlds of literature, music, and art are can be sources of great comfort in a time of grief. Think of the great works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven; what comfort they can bring! If you have always wanted to paint, take some classes and dedicate your efforts to the memory of your grandchild. Sign up as a volunteer for a local hospital or food bank. Helping others can strengthen the nurturing identity that has been injured by this death. By putting your pain to work, the good that comes from it can heal.

When a great loss hits us, we are numbed and life seems meaningless for a while. But with the passage of time, we again begin to see that life is still worth living, not just for others but for ourselves, as well.

Just as you loved a grandchild, there are others -- friends, neighbors, and even strangers -- who await your love. For all its cruel twists, this life is still the only one we are given. You have every right to be a survivor and to make the most of each day and each year. I suggest you get started today.

--By Helen Fitzgerald

From Our Members...

Just An Idea



As you sit and ponder what the New Year will bring for you and your family, try this:

1. Take a notepad and pen and at the top of the page write "This year I hope I can..."
2. Then make a list of what you hope will take place during the year.
3. Later, go a step further and number each hope in order of preference and importance
4. Then work on it - one thing at a time. And take it off your list as it's accomplished for a goal is reached.
5. Then you can look at your progress.

Please remember, each and every time you accomplish something you set out to do no matter how small or trivial it may seem at the time - THAT IS PROGRESS

-- TCF Anniston, AL

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 than in-person meetings. 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 & 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:

Jan. first for Feb. Birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and let me know. I will try to fit them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



Get Your Photo Buttons... Photo Buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at our monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, call Connie at (310) 292-5381. You can mail her a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and she can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. Each child is given a page in the book. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

Library Information... At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let Lori know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to Lynntcf@aol.com 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 (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.

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 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

Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

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

The National Office of TCF... has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register.

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

FOUR OPTIONS TO GIVE

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

The Compassionate Friends South Bay/LA.

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 Eric Vines, July 1977 - July 1991. As we start a new year I think of past New Years celebrations and smile. I'm glad we always went overboard on celebrations because I remember how much you enjoyed them. The World Wide Candle Lighting was last week and it warmed my heart to see the more newly bereaved celebrate their child's life and pay tributes to their short lives here on Earth. We love and miss you, Mom

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



January 2026

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.