



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Feb. 2026 ISSUE

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

OUR NEXT MEETING:
will be **Feb. 5th, 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 Feb 5th.meeting will start with "Memories: Both A Curse and a Blessing."

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 Feb 5th** meeting will start with **“Memories: Both A Curse and A Blessing.”** In our grief, memories play an important part of reconciling the past and the present. Memories will haunt us with the unfairness of our loss and they will also soothe our raw feelings. Though our children have been taken from us, our memories can sustain us as we grieve. We hang onto our memories fiercely, gratefully, because they remind us of who we are and where we have been. But, then, comes the fear of forgetting anything about our child which instantly overwhelms us. The many, many memories of our hopes and dreams for our loved one must be remembered and come to terms with for our recovery. We invite you to join us, as together, we learn how to balance out some of the emotions that come along with our memories of happier times verses our new reality.

Falling Feathers

Posted on August 6th, 2024

Searching my bookcase, I chose a small book that had been there for years. “Hmm... might be worth a re-read,” I mused, opening a page. And there it was, gentle as a feather falling to earth, “Dear Mom” – in her handwriting – “I hope you like this book as much as I did. Love, Robin.” I sat in the nearest chair and with the memory came tears. How she loved sharing everything with me, her excited voice on the phone, “Guess what!” Her memory was with me all that day.

Memories are as unpredictable as birds. For bereaved parents, memories can arrive as cheery guests or painful tormentors. In the years since cancer took our daughters, Robin and Sara, my memories are often mixed – both welcome and dreaded – firing up explosions of joy, gratitude, intense longing and sorrow. They come swarming in when I look at photos, hear a certain song or visit a favorite place. Other times they appear out of the blue, barging in uninvited like raucous ravens, catching me by surprise. Or as gently as a falling feather.

I believe that memories are blessings. They speak to the history of our love, as it seems they are all we have left. As mothers, we recall the moment when we first knew our baby was there, hidden away deep inside. And finally holding him in our arms, amazed at such beauty. Robin was the child I prayed for, having waited five years for her. How we loved her independence, her

determined spirit, her happy nature. We miss that so much. In the hospital she often woke from her morphine haze to call out, “Is my mom here?” That is one of my mixed memories. Sara was the tail-end of four daughters, but she stood her ground with feistiness and wild red hair. She was also funny and sweet, and she gave us grandchildren. I remember the sad eyes of the hospice nurse, as I held Sara, weeping.

Though our children are gone from this world, our memories can help ease them back into our hearts and bring us hope. Emily Dickinson’s poem, *Hope is the Thing with Feathers* speaks of birds that “perch in the soul.” They are there to sing and keep us warm, “in the chilliest land and on the strangest Sea,” which is certainly where we are now. So, we hang onto our memories fiercely, gratefully, because they remind us of who we are and where we have been. And we need that now more than ever. We can be creative in holding those memories. We can write journals or make scrapbooks about our life with our child or write letters to him or her, expressing things we never got to say. One mother I know has a party to celebrate her son’s birthday, where his friends enjoy memories of their happy times with him.

Shared memories and stories keep our children with us and ease our grief. After Sara left, my heart was in added pain over her two children, now motherless at ages 8 and 12. I wanted desperately for them to remember their mom. But because we did not live nearby, I decided to make a book for them with stories of Sara as a girl, before they knew her. Her siblings and I wrote our memories—often humorous—in a large album with photos, mementos, and Bible verses, and gave it to Sara’s children. Hopefully, our storytelling has been a comfort and connection for them, and these memories will become part of their survival guide... and that in the telling and the hearing, we will all find strength. For those of us who wrote, the experience was incredibly blessed, allowing us to pour out our love for this amazing person of ours.

So when memories arrive, we can welcome them and all the emotions that tag along. Greet them with tears or smiles. Maybe even a good laugh. Gently hold these pieces of your life as you look back and remember. And in those memories, see all the love that has carried you and yours through past generations. In remembering the former years, we gain hope for the future—a hope that knows without doubt that even in the worst of times, love will not leave us. The little bird may fly



off but will soon return to be shared with others. This sharing can be at a support group table with other parents who need our touch, our understanding, to hear of our hope. In this, we help keep many warm, and this is not the end of our story.

--Joan Moss

Memories and Connections

Posted on August 5th, 2025

Recently, I was shopping for a sympathy card and many of the cards had a message that essentially said, "May your memories bring you comfort." I received cards like these when my son, Danny died. Perhaps you received similar cards when your child died. My reaction to the sentiment in the cards was that, not only did memories not bring me comfort, but they were a painful reminder of my son's absence. I didn't need memories, I needed him back!

It's been 11 years since Danny died, and today I have a different perspective. Those memories that were once so painful, now help keep me connected to my son.

The summer memories are the best. Every summer for 20 years, we would load up the car with bikes, kayaks, boogie boards, and lots of sun screen and set off for Cape Cod for a week's vacation. We always had a competition to see who would be the first to see the bridge over the canal. The time away from school, work, and routines became a much-anticipated tradition for our family. When the kids got older, my husband and I offered to take them to other places for vacation, but they both still wanted to go to the Cape. When Danny was in middle school, he wrote a poem about the Cape that captured his feelings about those special times. Here is a snippet from his poem:

"Cape Cod is the place for me to be me,
to relax by the sea.

There is nowhere I have to be.
That's the life for me."

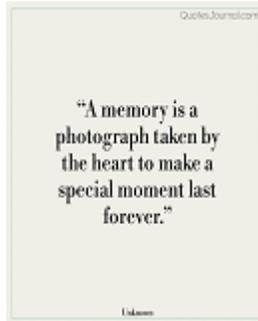
After Danny's death at almost 21 years old, I went to a healing concert with Alan Pederson put on by our local TCF chapter. At one point, Alan asked the audience to recall a memory of our loved one and stay with it. The memory that came to mind was of Danny running along the beach when he was about two. Later I wrote about it in my journal: "The sky is a vivid, cloudless blue. The sea sparkles and dances as it stretches to meet the

endless sky. The sun slants over the dunes, casting a golden glow over us. As I walk, I watch you. Running, laughing, you are so free and so happy. And I am happy too. Your life has so much potential, so much promise. This golden memory makes me feel warm all over and I want to keep it with me."

With such ties to Cape Cod, it is no wonder that in my darkest time of grief, I returned there to try to find some peace. I remember vividly that first summer after Danny died. I was at the beach, and I pulled my sand chair into the surf. As the waves rolled over my feet and the sun beat down on me, I just cried and cried and cried. Another day found me pulling my bike off the bike path, plopping down by the side of the trail and sobbing, overcome by memories of all of us riding on this same trail, perhaps with an ice cream shop as our final destination. Long walks on the beach allowed me time to process my grief and gave me the space I needed to start to heal. Sometimes I came to the beach with my journal and pen and wrote letters or poems to Danny. The beach is where I feel the most connected to Danny because of our shared love of this special place.

With my husband's impending retirement last year, we considered a move to the Cape. This had always been our dream, but after losing Danny, I didn't think I wanted to leave the town where he grew up, where he was buried, and where we had made 36 years' worth of connections. I was afraid that moving away would diminish the connections I had with Danny. After all, he had never been to the house that we would be moving into. After much thought, we decided to make the move. We have made a conscious effort to bring reminders of Danny with us to our new home. His poem about the Cape hangs in our bedroom along with photos of him at the Cape at different ages. His drawing of a fishing boat that he did in high school hangs in our living room. My husband fishes with Danny's fishing gear (he was passionate about fishing.) Although he was never here, he feels so close to us. And of course, as I walk the beach, I feel him walking right there beside me. When I found a pair of angel wing shells, I knew for sure that he was with me.

As the years have passed, I have found comfort in my memories of Danny. Not all my memories are "golden memories" because Danny struggled with mental health issues, and we had many difficult times. However, I have learned to choose which memories I want to focus on and which to



allow only a fleeting entrance into my consciousness. I still don't buy those sympathy cards about comforting memories though because I know that comfort only comes with time.

Perhaps this summer, you will find new ways to nurture your relationship with your child. Our children's lives on earth may end, but our love for them and their love for us lives on forever.

--Joan Baker Scott Joan Baker Scott is a bereaved parent who lost her son, Danny, to suicide in 2012.

I'm Afraid I Will Start to Forget My Child, What Can I Do? 18 Suggestions from Parents Who've Been There



As you well know, the biggest fear that parents have is that they will somehow lose memories of their precious child. To add to their fear, is a feeling that goes something like this: Every day that goes by, puts me further away from my child. And this feeling is based in reality. With each passing day, more and more events begin to fill our memory bank, adding to the distance between now and when our child was alive. The question is: What can I do to preserve the memories? Let's look at suggestions I've gotten from parents when I asked them, "What have you done to keep your child's memory alive?" Here is what they said:

1. I went into my phone and pulled all the pictures and videos that I had my son in them and placed them on my computer. Next, I sent out a text asking his friends and relatives to send me everything they had. I was surprised at what came in. Then, I created a file. When I'm feeling down, I pull up the file and—and there he is smiling and laughing.

2. I pulled together pictures and videos of my son, created my own YouTube channel (anyone can), posted the memories, and sent everyone the link. People loved it and it's there forever. How cool is that?

3. I created a scholarship at my daughter's college. Once a year I get a letter from the scholarship recipient thanking me and my husband. It's like my daughter is continuing to help others. Well, she is.

4. I wrote a book about my daughter's life. I did. It's self-published on Amazon. I really don't expect anyone to buy it—except my friends and relatives. Amazon has a print-on-demand program. It was

such an incredible moment when I held the book in my hand. It sits on my night stand and sometimes before I go to sleep, I'll pick it up and read a few pages. I know she would be—or rather is—proud of me.

5. When the weather is OK, I visit my son's grave. I take a chair and a book and just sit there and read. I also talk to him and tell him what's going on.

6. When I make reservations at a restaurant, and they ask, "What's the name?" I give them my son's name. It's so nice when I hear the greeter call out, "Table ready for Jason." I know he would get a kick out of it.

7. Three months after my 19-year-old son died, I went to his room (which, by the way, I haven't touched—other parents from my support group tell me it's OK. I'll change things when I'm ready—but not yet.) Anyway, I took some of his tee-shirts and shirts and made them into a quilt. Sometimes I wrap myself in it. It's like he is wrapping his big arms around me.

8. I talk to my daughter every day. It's been 17 months. I know it sounds strange, but it gives me comfort. I talked to her when she was alive, I figured why stop now? I tell her what her dad, brother, and sister have been doing and how much I miss her. I tell her about my daily hassles and sometimes I actually ask her advice. She was 22 when she died and was a very smart girl, so sometimes I imagine what she would say when I ask her questions. Like I say, it gives me comfort.

9. I planted a tree. I call it my "Serena" tree because that is her name. I can see it outside my kitchen window. I have watched the leaves fall in the autumn and watched it come back to life in the spring. It's been 3½ years and it has grown nearly a foot since I first planted it. It is a living thing.

10. Once a week I volunteer at my daughter's grade school. She was seven when she died. I read to the kids. I couldn't do it during the first year after she died. But now I really enjoy it. The kids are so cute.

11. I've written my daughter letters. When I first started doing it, I would cry. After a few tries, I didn't cry so much and now it feels like I'm talking to her. Recently, a friend gave me a suggestion on my writing. He said to write a letter as if my daughter is writing it. I know it sounds strange, but after I finished my first one, it felt good—like my daughter is talking to me. I've done three so far.

12. A couple years ago I went to a workshop in which the speaker gave a memory suggestion. He

said to sit down with pen and paper and write ten great memories of your child, even if he or she died in infancy. Number each memory and write down as much detail as possible—the more the better. Then, sit there with your first memory and grab the little finger on your left hand. As you grip your finger, go through the memory by visualizing it and re-experiencing it as vividly as you can. The more vivid the better. Then, go to the next finger and next memory and continue with this until you've done this with the ten memories. From then on you can be anywhere and take a minute to grip any finger and re-experience the memory. Try it. It's wonderful. It brings my son closer.

13. My husband died when my daughter was 5. A few months later, I bought her a teddy bear, cut a hole in the back, placed a small amount of my husband's ashes in a sandwich bag and into the hole, and sewed up the hole. She understands what the ashes are and feels good about carrying some of her dad around.

14. I joined a support group for parents whose child died of an overdose. There's only six or seven of us, but it gives me chance to talk about my daughter to people who are going through what I am. They've kind of gotten to know her and I've gotten to know their children as well. They understand.

15. I bought one of those rotating digital picture albums and have it on my desk at work. It takes a good hour for the entire set of my son's pictures to rotate through. Sometimes one of my workmates will be walking by, see a picture and ask me about it. It's always nice when I can talk about him.

16. At our dining room table we've set up a chair that is "William's chair." I know people think it's weird, but it's just a way for us to keep his memory alive. It's where he used to sit, so why not honor him this way?

17. My son was cremated, and I took a small amount of his ashes and put them in this necklace I got online. carry him around wherever I go and even wear it to bed.

18. My daughter, Pamela, died 27 years ago of a brain tumor and the year after she died, we started a yearly fundraiser in her name for brain tumor research. Can you believe we have raised more than \$20 million!

So, there they are, great memory savers from 18 parents. As you can see, there are many ways to keep your child's memory alive. Which of the 18 appeals to you? Regards, Dr. Bob

--Bob Baugher, Ph.D. www.bobbaugher.com

February

In February we celebrate the birth of George Washington and Abe Lincoln. Lent begins. We wonder if the groundhog will see his shadow, and we have Valentine's Day. Candy, flowers and cards are often exchanged.

Many cards are given and received between parents and children as a way of showing love for one another. Valentine's Day is another holiday on which bereaved parents remember the drawings, cards and gifts received from their deceased children.

Take time out to be good to yourself. Perhaps you could remember your child with a special flower, or could do something kind in your child's memory for someone in need. Most of all, take time to tell your living children and your spouse or someone special how fortunate you are to have them and how much they mean to you.

--Lorraine Bauman TCF Fairmont, MN



The Greatest Grief

A sudden terrible accident killed your child. That terrible phone call changed your life with no warning – you didn't get to say good-bye – this has to be the most terrible loss of all.

Your child died by suicide. You feel you should have been able to prevent it. Your guilt is devastating. How can you live with such incomprehensible tragedy?

You only had one child – now you have none and your focus in life is gone. What's the point of living? What could be more devastating?

You've experienced the death of more than one of your children. Will it happen again? How does one survive this pain?

When your baby died, your dreams died. You have few memories and you're too young to be suffering like this. This loss is the most unfair.

Someone murdered your child – an unbelievable violation – you're angry and your frustration with the legal system feeds your anger. This must be the very worst.

You're a single parent. Your child has died, and you have no one to lean on, no one to share your grief. Surely your suffering is the most painful. The unbelievable has happened. Your adult child died. You had invested so much in that child. Now who is going to care for you in your old age?

The truth is that the death of any child is the greatest loss, regardless of the cause, regardless of the age. Our own experience is far more painful than we had ever previously envisioned, so how could we possibly comprehend what others have undergone?

To make comparisons between our own suffering and the pain of others is an exercise in futility. It accomplishes nothing and sometimes can be hurtful to others. To say that one type of death produces a greater or deeper grief than another tends to place different values on the children who have died. Each child is worthy of 100% of our grief. Each person's sorrow is 100%, because we love each child, those still living and those who have died, with 100% of our being. I can't imagine wanting to walk in the shoes of any other bereaved parent. Can you?

-- Peggy Gibson, TCF, Nashville, TN

No Greater Pain

I know you mean well, but you don't understand.
There are no words to explain.

Although on the surface, I may appear fine,
remember, I buried a child of mine,
and there is no greater pain.

Grief is taboo in our civilized world,
I despise this hideous game.

I must smile, while going insane.

For God's sake, a part of me died—you can't
imagine how often I've cried,
And there is no greater pain.

If I look well, or laugh when you joke,
you think I'm my old self again.

I'm raw inside, a shell of me—the woman you
know can no longer be.

And there is no greater pain.

Look deep in my eyes, acknowledge my loss,
as my heart beats its hollow refrain.

I'm caught in a web of infinite whys,
I'll mourn for my son 'As the rest of me dies,
and there is no greater pain.

--Madelaine Perri Kasden

In loving memory of her son Neill Perri

"A Guardian Angel"

An angel in heaven, is what you are,
Sent to watch over us, near and far.
Though you were only here for a short while,
In our hearts, you'll always bring a smile.

Your tiny footprints, etched in our hearts,
A love so strong, it never departs.
A memory cherished, a bond so true,
Forever in our hearts, our angel, we'll carry you.

"A Piece of My Heart"

A life so brief, a love so true,
A piece of my heart, forever with you.
A pain so deep, a wound so raw,
A love so strong, it's all I have left to draw.

Though you never took a breath, or opened your
eyes,

In my heart, I know, you'll always be alive.

A memory cherished, a bond so true,
Forever in my heart, my baby, I'll carry you.

--Baby Loss Awareness newsletter

Newly Bereaved...

A Mother's Hope

When our son died, I hoped
it was a mistake. It was not. I
hoped it was a dream. It was not.
Before my son died, I hoped for enough time in that
day to clean my house, provide my family with
clean laundry, taxi service and healthy meals.
I loved dinner time with my family. After my son
died, I did not know what day it was, cleaning our
home or doing laundry were things I no longer
thought of. I did not cook, I did not shop for food, I
did not eat.

I hoped he would come back. He did not. I
hoped I would gain understanding. I did not. I
could not understand how I could wake up on a
perfectly normal morning and my son was gone
from his room, gone from our home and gone from
our lives. I hoped for acceptance. I found none. I
hoped those around me would understand me.
They did not. How could my beautiful, vibrant,
healthy son be gone?

I hoped for peace. I had none. I hoped for
sleep. I had none. I hoped for courage to resume
my daily life. My life was out of my control. The
only thing I was sure of in the early days of my grief
was that I knew our life would never be the same
again.

I hoped this empty feeling would go away. It did
not. I hoped that some day my family would be
normal again. We were not. I hoped I could stop
looking for our son in every young man I saw that
was tall, slim and had sandy colored curly hair. I



could not.

I hoped I could become the parent to my surviving children that I knew they deserved. I could not. I knew how much they were hurting but I could not help myself and I could not help my children. My younger son needed my comfort. My daughter, expecting her own child needed my comfort. I was their mother but there was no comfort in me to give. I hoped I could be a wife to my husband. I could not.

I never hoped for laughter. How could I laugh when my son was dead. I hoped the feelings that consumed my every waking moment would somehow change so I did not feel as though I could never again be in a public place without crying.

At 6 months after my son died, I hoped for a reprieve. I no longer could stand the pain and I saw my doctor. I knew he must have an answer to my question, —How long will I feel like this?— He did not.

I had begun attending Bereaved Parents meetings and hardly spoke a word at the first meeting. I could not stop talking at my second meeting. I had found the glimmer of hope that I had been searching for. I hoped this all consuming grief would never again happen to my family. But it did! When my daughter in law was 6 months pregnant, my son told me their baby had died. How I grieved for my son. I knew what he was feeling. I hoped to be able to help him and his wife. I could not.

I then realized that all of the things I had hoped for had begun to come about but had taken a lot of time. I hoped my son and his wife could hold on long enough for time to help and heal. They have.

When my son died, I never hoped for joy. I could not imagine joy as part of our lives ever again. But there is joy. When my son was a baby, a toddler, a young child, a teenager and young man, I watched over him. I thought I would watch over him for my entire life. But I was wrong. I hope with all my heart that he is watching over me.

I now have the understanding I hoped for. I have peace. I finally sleep. I find joy every time I see a tall, slim young man with sandy colored curly hair. I do not cry as often. So there is hope. We all have a future; we have memories. No matter how long our children were part of our lives, we have memories.

The first time I realized that joy would one day be part of my life was the day I remembered a trick my son played on his little brother. He gave him a glass of buttermilk instead of regular milk and

pretended it was a mistake. We have laughed so many times about this little story. I can still see the twinkle in his eye. I can hear my son and daughter as he made up names for her to tease her. Oh, how he loved to laugh.

I remember the look on his face when I discovered the snake he put in my garden terrarium. I know the joy I feel every time I think of my son, share a memory with someone or look at pictures of him will never change. My hope as a Mother is that we all will find peace and cherish the joy our children have brought to our lives.

-- Betty Lineberger, BP/USA of Marion County FL
Bluegrass KY tcf newsletter

Seasoned Grievers...

Seasoned Griever



They say that childbirth is a pain you forget, but nobody ever says that about child death. Losing your child is like having a piece of broken glass jammed into your heart. Permanently. Over the years, the sharp edges are often worn smooth, like sea glass, and cut less sharply. You learn to breathe through the pain. You survive. But you certainly never forget. And the younger your child was when you lost them, the longer you live with the remembering.

It has been 22 years now since the terrible day when our fifteen-month-old son, Noah, was run over in my in-law's driveway. Noah was our fourth child and my husband and I were 35 years old, still getting our marriage, family, and careers on track, when our world was shattered. It has also been 21 years since the day, nine months after Noah's death, when our fifth child, Jonah, was stillborn. We buried two babies in the space of ten months. And two decades later, we are still recovering. In many ways, we will mourn their absence for the rest of our lives.

I'm pretty sure two decades qualifies me as a long-term griever. Certainly, there was a time when I never thought I'd last this long. Whenever I attend a TCF conference and they ask for a show of hands, although I'm much younger than the oldest bereaved parents in attendance, I'm definitely among the longest. Indeed, those of us who lose our children to miscarriage or stillbirth, or as infants or toddlers, will likely live for many decades with our grief. We are the ones for whom that blessed "normal" life we once knew was shorter than the one we'll live long after we've

crawled through the valley of the shadow of death. We are the bread and butter of the grief world, the stalwart attendees of support groups and conferences forever after our children's funerals are over. We will live to power wash the lichens growing on their gravestones, time and again, as the trees we planted in their memories reach ever closer to the sky.

Part of my responsibility as a long-term griever is to assure the newly bereaved that they, too, will survive and, yes, even thrive, again. Which is what we all need to hear when our worlds come crashing down around us. But there will always be work to do. As much as I hope that some day I'll wake up to find all of my rough edges worn smooth, that day has yet to dawn. Jagged shards keep breaking off, exposing sharp, shiny edges. Some are new cracks, but some are the same old worn spots I've glued back together many times. And I must confess to three that I find myself having to repair, again and again. Forgiveness. Anger. Regret. All have persisted. And along with cupboards full of things considered fragile, like wedding china and crystal, it seems I'll have a relationship with these three nouns for far longer than I ever had my sons.

F is for Forgiveness and I feel like I've earned a PhD in this particular field of study. Noah was run over by my sixteen-year-old niece, which was an accident. But that didn't make it any easier for me to forgive her. Especially when she didn't take responsibility for her actions, nor were there any apparent consequences. Jonah's death resulted in a medical malpractice lawsuit in which we prevailed. But that didn't mean the doctor took responsibility, either. On the contrary, she fought us in court.

I teach my kids that there are three parts to an apology: "I'm sorry," "I did this," and "Here's how can I try to make it up to you." The people responsible for the deaths of our sons said none of those things, but we couldn't move forward without figuring out some way to forgive for our own sake.

I have learned that forgiveness isn't necessarily forever. It's fluid. Relationships change over time, things resurface, and sometimes the people we forgive are lost to us forever. Sometimes self-preservation means excommunicating people we once loved. Sometimes the people we need to forgive are ourselves. We can talk all day about the "if only's" because we all loved our children

more than ourselves and "if only" we'd known better, we would have done better. We've all learned the hard way that we're not in control. It's not our fault. We are only human. Extending that grace to others becomes our mandate, difficult as it may be, even if we simply stand on the shore and shout it out to the sea.

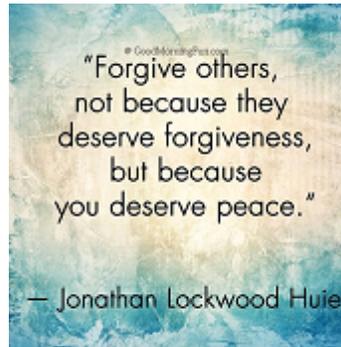
One of the many disappointing things we experienced in our hour of need was that the people we expected would be present for us didn't show up. And yet, they're still in our lives all these years later. People don't always behave the way we think they will. Sometimes they behave much, much worse. Conversely, others show up whom we never expected, strangers even. And so we learn to be grateful for the kindness of strangers, to embrace the gifts we do receive. And for the things we don't, we try to relinquish our expectations and forgive.

Sometimes we are still Angry. Yes. We are. Anger still exists, right in between what we've lost and what remains, and how the world goes on, regardless. We might be angry with people, like family and friends, or with institutions, like the medical system or insurance companies, or with the higher power seated on the throne of our particular house of worship. We might not be angry but our anger might be triggered by what people feel the need to say, even all these years later.

We may still be angry about the specific circumstances of our child's death or the fact that people's attitudes haven't changed or that the people responsible are still driving around or practicing medicine. Or we might be angry about people's behavior towards us. We might feel they treat us like pariahs, like we're the problem and it's our fault that our child died. We'll always be "those people". And that's why they can't be our friends or let their child sleep over at our house.

But we have to remember that others are trying to find the fault line, to rationalize why this would never happen to them. Even though all of us, here, know that it could. Sometimes we have to talk ourselves off the ledge. It's okay to throw yourself a tiny pity party. But when the party ends, sweep up the mess and move on to a happier place.

Regret is really difficult to live with. It's insidious, seeping deep down inside of us and hiding in our cells, erupting as broken heart syndrome, digestive disorders, or hypertension.



When Noah died I remember thinking if anything should cause cancer, it's this. And maybe it will, some day. In the meantime, live with our remorse we must. Regardless of the circumstances, we all failed, as parents, to protect our children. And we have to make our peace with that.

Regret may last forever but time creates the space to live with it and cushion the blow. So, breathe. Every time we inhale deeply, straight into the anguish we're avoiding, and then exhale with gusto, we release a little of whatever we're holding onto. And we create a tiny space within which we can replace our sorrow with joy. Then we can begin, again, to smile, laugh, and enjoy our lives.

We are all works in progress. Forgive yourself. Release your anger. Manage your regrets. Over and over, again. Rub those broken edges between your bloody fingers until they're worn smooth. Every day is a new day. Keep gluing yourself back together. As Leonard Cohen said, "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."
--Kelly Kittel

For Friends And Family...

Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say:

"There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back—but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for the "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people—who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know— next month.

--John DeBoer TCF Greater Omaha, NE

Helpful Hint...



Thoughts For When You Get Depressed:

Don't ever try to understand everything -
Some things will just never make sense.
Don't ever be reluctant to show your feelings -
When you're happy, give into it!
When you're not, live with it!
Don't ever be afraid to try to make things better
You might be surprised at the results.
Don't ever take the weight of the world on your shoulders
Don't ever be threatened by the future
Take life one day at a time .
Don't ever feel guilty about the past -
What's done is done, learn from any mistakes you might have made.
Don't ever feel that you are alone -
There is always somebody there for you to reach out to.
Don't ever forget that you can achieve
So many of the things you can imagine,
Imagine that!
Don't ever stop loving
Don't ever stop believing
Don't ever stop dreaming your dreams
--Author Unknown,

Book In Review...



This Little While: For Parents Experiencing the Death of a Stillborn Baby or Very Young Infant Our number one selling book for infant loss. Full of information beginning with hearing the bad news, recognizing the reality, things to do before you leave the hospital, naming your baby, grieving the loss, healing together. Ends with sample birth/death announcements, support organizations. Available from www.Centering.org \$5.50

Welcome...



As members of The Compassionate Friends, we understand what you are experiencing. Like you, we have also lost a dearly beloved child. We share your pain, and while every journey through grief is unique, we are here to support you. We welcome you to attend our meetings and see for yourself how helpful they can be.

**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

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

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

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
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...



Rand Acts of Kindness

My brother, Ryan Allen Hartranft, passed away from a heroin overdose on January 12th, three days before his 22nd birthday. My family and I decided to do something different this year to celebrate Ryan's life on his 4-year "Angelversary." We began doing Random Acts of Kindness in his memory and asked those we know to participate with us if they would like to. It could be something as simple as holding the door for someone, buying the next person in line a coffee, giving to charities, or whatever your heart desires!

This year we completed 26 Random Acts Of Kindness between January 12th and 15th to celebrate his life and his 26th birthday that would have been the 15th!

Some Random Acts of Kindness we completed were:

- Buying donuts for the staff at Railside Auto Inc. where Ryan had worked.
- Donating 2 envelopes with \$26 each to Railside for them to choose the recipients.
- A birthday cake for a couple's grandson who was turning 7 that my mom met at Wal-Mart.
- Movie tickets for a dad and his 2 children.
- Lunch for a father and son sharing a milkshake (Ryan LOVED milkshakes).
- Donated Ryan's recovery books from rehab to Daymark Crisis Recovery Center.
- Donated 6 bags of clothing (some of Ryan's and some we purchased) to the Union County Community Shelter.
- Left money at a car wash in an envelope for someone to pay for their wash.
- Found a mom shopping with her 3 kids and gave her money to put towards her order.

Completing these 26 Random Acts of Kindness truly helped us all to know that even though it is always a tough time for us, we were so happy to be able to help others and to do so in memory of Ryan.

Each Random Act we did came with a card explaining what we were doing, and we encouraged people to share the moments with us by using #RAOKforRAH You can visit our Facebook page: Random Acts of Kindness In Loving Memory of Ryan to see all the Acts we completed.

--Sarah Hartranft, TCF PA

Ashley

When I think of Ashley,
I think of all the good times.
And some of the stupid little fights that we had.
Maybe those fights used to feel dumb
but now I miss them.
I love and will always hang on to the good times.
My biggest fear is that I will forget her.
If I don't think I'm going to remember,
I dig out old memories.
I think of her death sometimes
as we're sledding down a hill,
which is our life,
and the sled is getting faster to the end of her life,
or the bottom of the hill,
but my sled isn't going as fast as hers.
I know she can see me, but I can't see her.
I hear her calling my name,
but no words are coming out of my mouth to call her.
This is how I sometimes feel.

--Hannah Childs Northeast Baltimore

Siblings Speak

Someone took you away from me
and I wonder if they cared
about the ones they left behind
and the pain that each must bear.

Why did you have to leave me
when there was so much left to do
I'm not sure if I can go on
if I have to go on without you.

But life dictates the rules.
There are things I cannot change.
When you left my heart was torn in two.
My life got rearranged.

I have to believe I'll see you again.
It keeps the hope alive and new.
So until we meet again little brother,
never forget that I love you.

--Jenny, TCF, Indianapolis, IN

For Grandparents...

Grandparents Remembrance



We are the grieving grandparents, the shepherds of our children and grandchildren's lives. Our grief is two-fold and at times we feel powerless to help. We seek to comfort our children in the depths of their grief and yet we need the time and space to face our own broken hearts. We have been robbed of the special tender touch a grandparent shares with a grandchild, and we have lost a symbol of our immortality. As we walk by our child's side, we both give and draw strength. We reach into their hearts to comfort them, and when they reach out to us in their distress, we begin the journey to heal together. We continue to be their guardians. We allow traditions to change to accommodate their loss. We support the new ones, which symbolize the small steps on their journey. It is in their healing that our hearts find comfort.

--Susan Mackey TCF, Rutland, VT

From Our Members...

A Valentine's Day Wish



How I wish I could bring our children back to us for Valentine's Day—24 hours we could spend telling our children of our love. But, alas, we are doomed to spend another Valentine's Day without our beloved children. Others who have not lost a child, tend to take for granted these special days. A card that says "I love you, Mom and Dad" should be carefully folded and saved in a special place. All too many parents consider these cards to be renewable commodities. There's no need to save this one—"we'll always get another one next year."

For many of us, next year came and there was no card. Tears of sadness replaced tears of joy on this special day. But for many of us the memories remain of those Valentine's Days gone by. Because our child's love remains with us, our child will never truly be gone.

This year on Valentine's Day, let us shed tears of joy that we were given even a short time with our child—for this, no matter how short, can never be taken from us.

--Wayne Loder, TCF Lakes Area, MI

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



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

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

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

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to Lynntcf@aol.com Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please

remember to return them to our library.

Thank You... Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. A receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes if you include your name. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter.



Our Website... Leo Licciardone is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get your newsletter online. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at Lynntcf@aol.com if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

Phone Friends... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, sibling or grandchild with someone that someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.



Leo & Connie Licciardone (chpt. leaders)...(310) 292-5381
 Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (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

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

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

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

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

Save The Date...

49th TCF National Conference in Baltimore, MD
July 3 @ 8:00 am - July 5 @ 12:00 pm
Our conference is a place for bereaved families to find community and hope, while learning and sharing with others. Lifelong friendships are often made at the conference through meeting others who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. This eagerly anticipated event will take place in Baltimore, Maryland, during the weekend of July 3-5, 2026.

FOUR OPTIONS TO GIVE

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

The Compassionate Friends South Bay/LA.

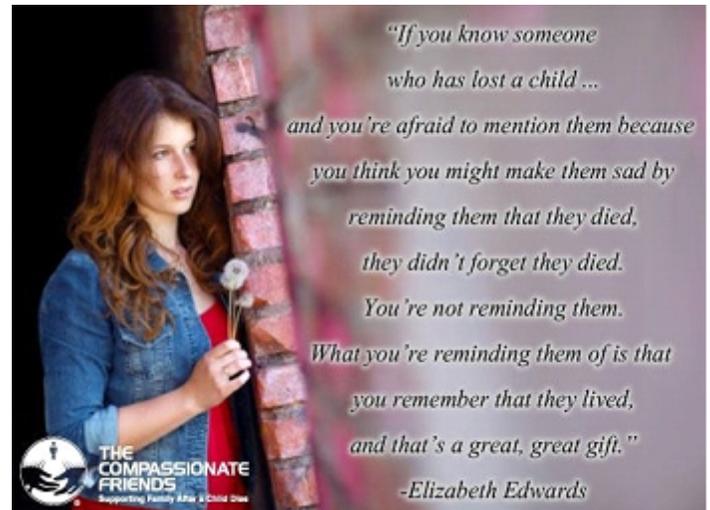
P.O. Box 1171

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.**

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



February 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.