



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

### **Supporting Family After a Child Dies**

**A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**April 2026 ISSUE**

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING:**  
will be **April 2nd, 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 April 2<sup>nd</sup> newsletter will start with “Am I Grieving The Right Way?”**

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or [Liccia79@gmail.com](mailto: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 April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will start with “**Am I Grieving The Right Way?**” Let me start by saying there is ‘No Right Way’. Just, ‘Your Way’ to grieve!! As long as you are not a danger to yourself or others, grieve in your own unique way. When we’re newly bereaved, shocks helps numb us to some of the pain. Then, as the all consuming pain descends on us it hurts so bad that we often times wonder if we might be doing something wrong in our grief. We want a short-cut through the pain. Sorry to say, there is no magic formula for grieving. It is completely defined by who died and our relationship with that person. Questioning everything, often is how we come to terms with our loss...a necessary but agonizing process. The following articles show how some parents and family members have survived their own losses. We hope you can join as at the next meeting as we share ways that helped after our own child, sibling or grandchild died.

### **There's No Wrong Way To Grieve**

There's no wrong way to Grieve. Death comes in so many shapes and sizes. Sometimes it's quick and extraordinarily tragic circumstances. Sometimes it's slow, painful, and drawn out. In all the different ways death affects our lives, grief is the same. Grief is an angry beast unlike any other, and let me assure you, there is no wrong way to grieve. There is no wrong emotion to feel. In fact, you will most likely feel everything and nothing at the same time.

You will feel angry, like the universe stole something so precious from you while simultaneously ripping out a piece of your heart, leaving a gaping void that not even Duct Tape can fix. You will feel the most intense sadness rush in, attacking every happy thought, crushing them with Hulk hand fury. This sadness may last minutes, hours, days, or weeks. But hold on, because just as quickly as it began, it will end. Breathe.

You will feel nothing. Numb. Lifeless. The simple acts of feeding and dressing yourself should be commended. You will find that it takes superhuman strength to get out of bed and face the day.

Some days you will feel happiness. You will remember the good times and wonderful memories you made. You will laugh at their quirks you miss most, like the annoying way they would slurp the last bits of melted ice from their favorite Sonic slushy, or how they insisted on singing along to

every song in their favorite songs. You would trade anything to hear that slightly off-key harmony just one more time.

More often than you might think, you will forget they are not here anymore. You will go about living your normal everyday life, need to ask them a question and as you pick up the phone to call . . . BAM! Reality punches you square in the face with epic force. The pain will rush in again, crippling you for a moment until your brain can negotiate with your heart and allow you back into the present. This will leave you with crippling anxiety and depression which there will be no cure.

The emotions and feelings you will experience are innumerable, but rest assured, you will get through each one and each one will make you stronger. You will reconcile your overwhelming pain and have more moments of peace. You will overcome your bitter sadness and experience joy. But you must never forget these feelings. Truly embracing your emotions is a powerful tool that takes courage and time. Use them to allow yourself to keep living. And most importantly, never forget that the beast of grief has many faces. There is no wrong way to grieve, so never apologize for what you feel in the moment. One day, you may even be able to help someone else with your voice.

--Jessica Grillo [www.herviewfromhome.com](http://www.herviewfromhome.com)

### **Permission to be Crazy**

It's OK to do strange things, anything that gives your heart a sense of peace, as long as you don't hurt anyone. Whether you're running down the beach, standing in the shower, or riding in your car screaming at the top of your lungs, releasing balloons with notes attached, talking to an empty chair, wearing their clothes, baking a cake for their birthday, signing their name on cards, decorating their grave with things they loved, or collecting angels in their memory - it's OK. No excuses are necessary.

You have learned to do what your heart needs, and that is a big step.

--by Elaine F. Stillwell, MA, MS - “Healing After Your Child's Death” booklet excerpt

### **Guilt**

I have had extreme guilt since losing Andrew. I couldn't understand it...he was home. He was safe



at home, in his room. I was 20 ft. down the hall from him. I was right there. I had checked on him before retiring to my room. By all accounts, in my mind, I failed him. Failed to do the most basic part of being a mother...keeping him alive. I've carried this immense guilt inside of me. Guilt that I could not keep my child alive. Guilt knowing that while I was asleep, he was literally dying 20 feet from me and I didn't know.

How could I not have woken up? Why didn't my motherly instinct naturally kick in and stir me to get up. Why didn't I know something was not right. Something was wrong. Why couldn't I save my child's life. Why didn't I run into his room and revive him. Why was I content and at peace in my bed because I organized a fucking closet! Why.... Why.... Why?

It has taken me a very long time to understand that I will never be able to understand that night. I know I did not do anything wrong. Andrew's death was the most freak accident. It was not my fault. However, carrying the guilt and surviving the guilt is something I face every day. It is etched into my soul. The basic instinct of protecting my child was robbed from me.

While I fight these demons inside, I push through, for Andrew. For his life. For his memory. Speaking his name. Sharing his story. Being there for others who have children with ADHD. Supporting them. Advocating. Anything I can do to honor Andrew.

Everything I do is honoring Andrew's memory. Making sure to live a life that he is proud of. And that includes, surviving the guilt.

--Andrews Angel's  
<https://andrewsangels.org/blog/>

## Filling In Holes

Today, my husband and I went to the nursery and bought some flowers and bedding plants to go in our gardens. Spring is here, and the weather is beautiful. Not cold all...but also not so hot that the thought of puttering in the garden brings a groan of dismay.

I remember my first Spring in this house. We were so excited. Our family was nearly complete. Our third son was on his way, and we had just had a house built. We were at the plant nursery at least once a week. Our life was busy, bright, untainted by grief.

I remember our second Spring in this house. How winter hung on, tenacious, unyielding, both

outside, and in our hearts. I remember the first warm Spring day. I came home from work early, determined to make SOMETHING grow in my life. Maybe I couldn't get my son to live, but I was going to make something live.

Grief was a raw, open wound then, and my anger was deep. I was angry at the world, at God...at everything. And so I approached my yard, shovel in hand. I decided I had to have a garden in the middle of my yard. I began furiously digging out the grass, making an oval in the center. It took me hours digging out that oval. But I wasn't through. I then decided I wanted a garden right by my doorway, so I dug out that area too. And then I made big holes, and tore out all the roots and stones and other junk.

I made big holes in my yard that day. And in the weeks to come I DID fill them. Funny thing, as I dug those holes and pulled on the grass, my anger drained away. My salty tears mixed with the sweat of exertion and the dirt, and ran off my arms undetected to the outside world. Digging those holes provided an outlet for my anger and my hurt.

Today I dug some more holes. But this time, my holes were smaller. And I filled them with small, delicate flowers, purple and white. I put bulbs in the ground too, filling other small holes. And I reflected back on another hole. The hole in my heart. No, I can't ever fill it with what "should" be there...my son. He "should" be almost seven now, full of energy, and wanting to plant flowers with Mom. But I have filled that hole with other things. With love and healing and memories. And with the lessons and the gifts my son gave me.

I never saw those gifts that Spring, as I was digging out holes in my yard. And though I would rather have that hole filled with my son's presence, I am grateful for the gifts he gave. And so I will go on, filling holes.

--Lisa Sculley

## Are We Bitter? It's Our Choice

A few years ago I received a phone call telling me that a drunk driver had killed my friend's husband. The caller said I should go to see my friend. My first thought was, I don't really know the widow all that well. I'm sure she will have lots of friends to help her. What if she doesn't want to see me? What if she thinks I'm intruding? After some internal struggle, I went to my friend's home. As I walked in, everyone became quiet, and then a whisper sort of rippled around the room, "Marilyn is



here!"

I saw my friend sitting on the couch. She motioned for me to come sit by her, and she whispered, "I've been hoping you would come. I have so many questions and I think you can answer my questions." My friend and I talked so easily that I nearly forgot anyone else was in the room.

That day I realized that I had gained a position of credibility because I had experienced the death of three of my four sons. Had I asked for that credibility? Absolutely not! But I got it anyway. The only choice I had in the matter was what I was going to do with my experience.

Anna Quindlan stated, "Our lives are defined by those we have lost." I read that quote years ago, and it stuck with me. So what does it mean?

I think it means that once we have walked through the terrible trauma of the death of our precious child our lives are changed forever. How our lives have changed is totally up to us.

#### **Because our child died:**

We can be more sensitive to others.

We can be more observant and notice when others seem to feel sad.

We can show up quickly when someone dies.

We can answer the question, "Am I going crazy?"

We can help someone know it is normal to want to see their deceased child.

We can sit and hold someone's hand when they are afraid.

We can remember the death date of a child.

We can let others know they needn't fear they might forget their child. It won't happen.

We can be the one to remember special days of our bereaved friends.

We can be the one to help empty out a deceased child's room.

We can be the one to understand because: we are different.

We have let our lives be defined positively by those we have lost.

#### **Here are the other choices.**

#### **Because our child died:**

We can choose to be insensitive.

We can choose to be indifferent to other's pain.

We can stay away when a tragedy happens to someone else.

We can refuse to offer comfort.

We can refuse to talk about our pain.

We can cause others to feel uncomfortable and afraid to mention our child's name.

We can allow our lives to be negatively defined by

those we have lost.

It's up to us. We can be bitter or better. It is our choice.

--Marilyn Heavalin, TCF Redlands, CA

## **The Season Of Easter/Passover**

Easter signifies the Risen Christ, the most hopeful and positive symbol of Christendom, and the Jewish Passover celebrates escape from oppression and slavery into the Promised Land. These holidays have not become burdened with required gift giving, home decorating and lavish partying.

As winter ends and the trees, shrubs and flowers of our valley burst into bloom, many bereaved parents feel their spirits lift a little bit, and the pall of gloom subsides for many. Some of our parents, in fact, leap into spring by planting a memorial garden for their child, which gives them something positive to do, and provides them with the pleasure of creating a little spot of beauty for them and their family and friends to enjoy.

The exercise and getting out into these rare and beautiful spring days are and added health bonus. And to have flowers from your child's garden to bring inside to brighten your kitchen soon gives a special joy.

Whatever the approaching religious season holds for you, pitch in and welcome it! And don't forget the power of flowers...especially a spot of your own creation!

--Jackie Rohr, TCF, Ventura, CA

## **Spring**

It's Spring Again. A season that always brings me back to the beginning. I watch now, with a combination of delightful anticipation and sadness, as tiny buds appear on trees and little sprouts of green struggle to break the surface of my garden. Everything comes back I think— except Peter. It's always in the Spring, along with the tulips and daffodils, that the emotions lurking just below the surface seem to want to break through my skin.

I remember clearly what it was like in those early years. The pain that was not like anything else I had ever felt, heard about, or read about. The frustration of not being able to describe what was happening, what I was feeling. I felt as though I was trapped in my own mind, unable to speak as the world tried to convince me that they understood



and sympathized. I was flailing around, angry at everything and increasingly furious that in spite of their entreaties, nobody "got it" - nobody who had ever suffered could imagine what my reality was like. I felt so isolated and alone, stripped of any purpose or reason to go on without my beloved Peter.

The only company I had then was my journal. I could blabber into my journal at will. Into it I vented all my pain, my suffering, and my frustration at never having the adequate words to describe what I was feeling.

Then one day, I came to a Compassionate Friends meeting. I felt as if I had been on a frozen planet, alone and afraid, and had come upon a campfire with a circle of knowing, understanding sufferers just like me.

They knew nothing about me - only that I had experienced the unthinkable - just as they had. They made no attempt to comfort me with empty words. Silently, they hugged me and shared their own pain while they nodded their understanding. And I knew they knew. As my young friend Marilyn said recently - I had found 'my people'.

Knowing that no one who hasn't survived this kind of catastrophe can possibly "get it", we are so fortunate to live in a time when "our people" can be found sitting together in a circle of friendship at a Compassionate Friends meeting, ready to welcome newcomers and offer a nod of understanding - not requiring any explanations or descriptions of this pain that has no words because they do indeed, "get it".

My compassionate friends have given my life new purpose. They have allowed me to keep Peter in this world. The memorials - the scholarships, the gardens, the park benches, the animal shelter that bears his name - all wonderful. But it is my compassionate friends that make Peter's memory come alive. It is a gift you keep on giving. And I am so grateful.

--Marie Levine TCF, Manhattan, NY

## A Lesson in Grammar

If you are like me . . .  
I don't want anybody  
to quibble with me about  
Whether my son's birthday  
is or was  
November 20,  
because  
a) it is,

b) it was, and  
c) it always be.

And,  
as to whether I have or had  
two children . . .

Because

a) I do,  
b) I did, and  
c) I always will have.

--Mary Cleckley, TCF Atlanta

## How Ought a Man Grieve the Loss of His Child?

Posted on February 19th, 2025



Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and it remains, primarily, a man's work. Yes, women are increasingly joining the US Fire Service, but to this day the profession of firefighting is represented by an overwhelmingly male demographic.

I am a man and I have spent my adult life in the fire service. I lived and moved and found my being with men. Grown men. Aggressive men who channeled their behavior in a positive manner toward protecting life and property in local communities. Compassionate men, who rarely worked alone.

There is biological predisposition and learned behavior firefighters have that expresses itself in what I like to describe as 'John Wayne-ing' it. This looks like fierce determination, grit, problem-solving, and not asking for help. These are behaviors many men learn, certainly, and if we are being fair, are also naturally predisposed to.

What then when we, men, experience the loss of our child?

On October 8th, 2023, we lost our 23-year-old son, Cooper, to suicide. I do not like writing this word, suicide. It pains me deeply, yet it remains a ground truth. I cannot undo it. A micro-atomic bomb was dropped on our house, on our lives. I dropped to my knees and the air was sucked out of me. I could not stand, and I could not breathe. Yes, I cried. I wailed. I still cry.

I remember many of the fires I fought. I was never alone; I was with a crew of firefighters. We always practiced the buddy system. We worked in pairs of at least two. If we went into a fire together, we came out together. It was that simple. As the firefighters say in "Backdraft," the movie, "If you go, we go." Meaning, your brother or sister firefighter is not going to leave you in the fire if something happens.

In a fire, in a fire station, in the fire department, firefighters practice a lot of togetherness. Tough times, responding to tough calls, requires “tight togetherness.” In a small fire, for example, firefighters can work off the hose line away from each other but within verbal communication range. In a complex, difficult fire, firefighters have a hand on each other’s back and do not leave each other. The proximity is dialed to the level of physical touch.

Immediately after my son died, my brother flew into town to be with me. He slept on the floor next to the couch where I slept for four nights. We got up at night a few times, cried and hugged each other. He chose to enter the fire with me, and we practiced a lot of tight togetherness. He had a hand on my shoulder. The immediacy of Cooper’s death required this level of proximity.

I know of a man who has lost a son. He is grieving deeply. He lives near a lake, and he has chosen to focus on his dogs, fishing, and solitude. He is ‘John Wayne-ing’ it. I respect this. I respect this man. I honor him. Who am I to suggest how a man ought to grieve? If we are truth telling, I could very, very easily be this man. I could check out, thumb my nose at all the things, and live in solitude. I do not think I would be wrong. Perhaps I should do this.

Despite this impression, my history and behavioral conditioning in the fire service runs deep within me, and I want to be with my brother. I do not want to be alone in my grief. I do not want to walk alone. I know that this is a complex, difficult fire and I need to be working with a crew.

I talk to my wife, my mom, my children, my brother, and my Compassionate Friends frequently. I want to talk about my son, what happened, and how I am feeling. I write. I walk. I breathe. I ground. I lean into tight togetherness and work as a team to help me make sense of this gaping, painful hole in my chest.

To be fair, I think a man needs time alone, processing time, time in the woods with his dogs fishing the lake. We lived in Montana for several years and this resonates with me. As I like to say it, we may need to hole up in a Nepalese cave and drink yak’s milk with the shamans to begin to make sense of this tragedy. A man needs this for a season. Maybe a few seasons. There is no shame in this.

Still, I want to call men to tight togetherness following the loss of their child. When the fire is complex, hot, dynamic, and dangerous, I know it is the time and place to practice tight togetherness. Hands on shoulders.

Knowing men the way I know them, especially working in high-risk operational environments for most of my life, it could be that only other men ‘who know’ are able to talk with a grieving man who has lost a child. This may be the signal that gets through the noise.

I remember a counselor coming to the fire station after a tragic call that our crew had responded to. The counselor had never worked with firefighters and did not know a thing about fire service culture. We ran the counselor off, as they had no credibility.

If a man has not lost a child and offers to help me, despite his best intentions, it would land flat. I would run him off. To talk to me about the loss of a child, you need to show up with credibility. You need to have lost a child.

The mantra of The Compassionate Friends is, “We need not walk alone.” In the fire service, this is a lived reality. Firefighters do not work alone. As the saying goes, “If you go, we go.”

Men, how ought we to grieve the loss of our child? With rugged determination and grit, certainly, but also, not alone. My humble admonition is this: do not do it alone. Go in together, come out together. Lace your solitude with compassionate family and friends ‘who know’ and will put a hand on your shoulder and not leave you during the darkest night of your soul. Especially in the loss of a child, practice tight togetherness. You need not walk alone.

--Kelly McCoy Kelly McCoy is a retired chief fire officer and educator. He lives in Lawrence, Kansas with his wife, daughter, and three dogs. He has two sons who live in Phoenix, AZ, and Pittsburgh, PA. Kelly lost his 23-year-old son Cooper in October of 2023.

### “Invisible Loss”

A tiny soul, a flicker of life,  
A love so strong, it cuts like a knife.  
A loss so great, a pain so real,  
Yet no one sees, what I truly feel.



A broken heart, a silent cry,  
Memories of you, I’ll never deny.  
An angel in heaven, shining bright,  
Guiding me through the darkest night.

Though the world may never know,  
The depth of my love, and the pain I’ve known.  
In my heart, I’ll always hold,  
The memory of you, so precious and bold.  
--Baby Loss Awareness newsletter,

## Newly Bereaved...

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

## Seasoned Grievors...

### I Forgive...

I've heard advice for the bereaved that forgiveness is an important part of "healing." I've worked hard at that elusive 'forgiveness' and came to the realization today that I am actually able to forgive quite a lot.

I forgive myself for not forgiving the people that caused my daughter's death. Some things are just not "forgivable", and she would understand.

I forgive others for sharing their "miracles" with me, not understanding how cruelly this attacks my heart, as I wonder where my daughter's miracle was.

I forgive others for not understanding me. I don't understand anything anymore, so I can't expect others to understand me either.

I forgive myself for not being able to do all the things I used to be able to do. I don't function as well as I used to and that's okay.

I forgive others for continuing to live in that other world where I once lived with my daughter. It's a good world and I miss it a lot.

I forgive myself for no longer fitting onto that world and not always being able to fake it. I am different now.

I forgive others for avoiding me. They don't know what to say and, quite frankly, that leaves me with nothing to say to them either.

I forgive my daughter for leaving me. She loved life and she loved me. I believe she loves me still. This is probably not what people mean when they say we need to "forgive" but it's the best I can do. It's enough that I can do anything at all, and maybe they will forgive me as well.

--By Debbie Ortega TCF Central Valley, Tracy CA

## My Old Friend Grief

My old friend Grief is back. He comes to visit me once in a while to remind me that I am still a broken man. Surely, there has been much healing since my son died six years ago, and, surely, I have adjusted to a world without him. But the truth is, we never completely heal, we never totally adjust. Such is the nature of the loss that no matter how much life has been experienced, the heart of the bereaved will never be the same. It's as though a part of us dies with the person we lose through death.

And so my old friend Grief drops in to say "Hello." Sometimes he enters through the door of my memory. I'll hear a song or smell a fragrance. I'll look at a picture and I'll remember how it used to be. Sometimes it brings a smile to my face ... sometimes a tear.

One may say that remembrance is unhealthy ... that we shouldn't dwell on thoughts that make us sad. Yet the opposite is true. Grief revisited is Grief acknowledged and Grief confronted is Grief resolved. But if Grief is resolved, why do we feel a sense of loss when we least expect it? Because healing doesn't mean forgetting and moving on with life doesn't mean that we don't take a part of our lost love with us. Of course the intensity of the pain decreases over time if we allow Grief to visit from time to time.

Sometimes my old friend Grief sneaks up on me. It's as though the ones we have lost are determined not to be forgotten. My old friend Grief doesn't get in the way of living. He just wants to come along and chat sometimes. Grief has taught me a few things about living I wouldn't have learned on my own. He has taught me that if I try to deny the reality of loss, I end up having to deny life altogether. Old Grief has taught me that I can survive great loss and although my world is different, it's still my world and I must live in it.



My old friend Grief has taught me that the loss of a loved one doesn't mean the permanence of death. My friend will be back again and again to remind me to confront my new reality and to gain through loss and pain.

--Adolfo Quesda

## Friends and Family...

### Vulnerable

I have found in the years that have passed that I am most vulnerable at times of remembrance. The word "Anniversary" no longer holds a promise of celebration. Instead, holidays and birthdays, family gatherings and otherwise joyous occasions contain an undertow of sorrow. If I get caught up in it, I quickly get pulled under and wind up gasping for breath. It is ironic that the presence of the absence can be so emotionally devastating.

You'll excuse me if the bounce is gone from my step. Or the depth of my laughter has changed. Issues that were once monumental, now seem insignificant. Please excuse me if I don't commiserate that your car needs repair or the faucet leaks. My focus on life has forever changed.

You'll excuse me if my spirit seems lost during holidays of any kind. They are now days "to bear", rather than days to share and enjoy.

You'll pardon me if I bring you down or make you feel discomfort, and I'll pardon you for not understanding that my life will never be the same; that although I'll survive, there will always be sorrow.

--Joan Fischer, TCF Nassau County Chapter, NY

### Helpful Hint...



The death of a child of any age, from any cause, is a shattering experience for a family. When a child dies, a family needs emotional support for the long grief journey that lays ahead. Since 1992, the South Bay/L.A. Chapter of The Compassionate Friends has been actively helping families toward the positive resolution of their grief following the death of a child.

Some bereaved people want to be left alone in their pain. Others know they need help and reach out. Sharing and hearing others' struggles is reassuring in that, there is hope. Hope in healing from the pain that seem unsurmountable right now. And it is so good to know that our children will never be forgotten. Even though we are apart... they are always and forever, still alive within our

hearts. Know that you are not alone and that others truly understand how deep these feeling are.

--Lynn Vines TCF So Bay/ L.A. CA

### Welcome...



### We Welcome You with Compassion, Love and Hope

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



### Book In Review...

*Creating a New Normal*: A guide to coping and informational skills for bereaved parents, family members, friends, therapists and grief related organizations. New book by Sandy Fox. Over 80 coping techniques and strategies to help both the newly bereaved and seasoned griever survive the death of a child. Order online at: [www.centering.org](http://www.centering.org)

### Forgive me, Friend

Forgive me, Friend  
 If I don't seem there  
 If I seem a little distant  
 Or you think I don't care.  
 My child has died  
 It's hard to explain  
 My down-an-out days  
 When I don't respond  
 Or I seem in a daze  
 My child has died.  
 I seem to be happy  
 When I suddenly cry  
 The emotion overpowers me,  
 Hard as I try.  
 My child has died  
 So forgive me, My Friend,  
 When I can't seem to give.  
 I'm doing all I can  
 Just to get up and live.  
 My child has died.

--By Gretchen Warren , TCF Solano County, CA

**Our Children****Remembered**

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

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

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

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

Angel Alva  
Born: 12/91 Died: 6/24  
Mother: Jackie  
Alva-Ornelas

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

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

**Our Children****Remembered**

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

Alexander John Jacobs  
Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19  
Mother: Diane Jacobs

Stefanie Jacobs  
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97  
Father: Rob Jacobs

Jason Christopher  
Jenkins  
Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20  
Parents: Alvin & Caprice  
Jenkins

Lizzie Jester  
Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18  
Father: Lee Jester

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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: Desiree Palmer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Donnie Vincent Puliselich  
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18  
Mother: Maria Puliselich  
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

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

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

## Remembered

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Our Children Remembered



Ryann 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.)

*Memories will bring you love from the past,  
courage in the present, hope for the future.*  
--Sasha

## A Birthday Tribute to: Edward W. Myricks II Born: 4/72 died: 10/11

Dear Son,

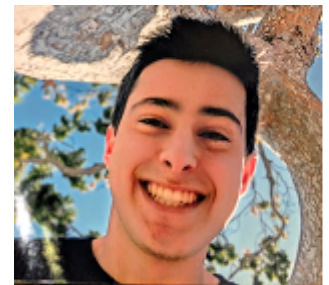
Happy Birthday sweetheart.  
It'll be 15 years since we've been able to hold and hug you and tell you how much we love you.

Forever loved... Mom & Dad



## Birthday Tribute to: Joseph Licciardone Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16

### Ten Years Without



Ten years without my brother.

I have nothing to say besides I miss you every single day and you not being here still doesn't feel real.

Existing without you has become less painful overtime but it's not something that I'll ever get over.

Even though I do believe that you are still around, in some shape or form, it'll always be painful that you're not physically here.

You should be here.

We should be growing up together and supporting each other throughout the rest of our lives.

You were more than just my older brother, you were my best friend, my free therapist. You were by my side for the first 20 years of my life. At school, family events, soccer games, summer camps, vacations, watching tv, playing video games, doing nothing at all. You were there.

I've survived my 20s without you and I'll have to keep going.

It's messed up, I'd know you'd want the best for me and to be happy but it's not fair.

I keep living and pushing forward. I purposely avoid thinking about how you're not here because it never ends. No matter what I do, how much I cry, how angry I get, how much pain I feel, how much I grieve, you'll still not come back the next day.

I do wonder what you'd be interested in now, what would you be into? What would you be doing? What would your opinions be on everything? Where would you be living? Who would your friends be? Would you be dating or

married? Would you be happy? I'll never know.

All I can do is live my life as fully as I can for both of us. It's hard.

I am lucky that I do dream of you all the time. Pretty much twice a week you're a part of my dreams. Majority of the time you're just along with me for the ride. They aren't dramatic dreams where I'm crying and hugging you as tight as I can. I have had plenty of those over the years, but luckily, the majority of the dreams you are just existing with me. I am forever grateful for those dreams.

I truly do believe that you have been with us this whole time in ways that we can't comprehend. I do feel like all living things are connected in some way and when I eventually pass I'll be with you in whatever way that is. But in the meantime, I love you with all my heart Joseph. Please keep visiting me in my dreams and hanging out with me. I'll keep trying to enjoy life as much as you did and just spread kindness and fun to everyone. I'd be honored to keep the memory of you alive and I'll gladly talk about you to anyone that will listen. I love you Joseph, always and forever.

--Vincent Licciardone, Joseph's brother

## By Siblings...



### It's Not Fair

It's not fair that my only sibling, my older brother, my best friend died.

But I have to survive this.

It's not fair that I won't have nieces or nephews, nor will my future children have Michael as the wonderful uncle that he would have been.

But I have to survive this.

It's not fair that he wasn't here to give me a hard time about turning 30.

But I have to survive this.

It's not fair to have to deal with such a heart wrenching blow.

But I have to survive this.

As all of us know at TCF, life sometimes isn't fair.

We all have to survive the pain of losing a sibling or a child. It is not fair that we have to, but we do. It has been one year and three months since my brother died, and I have to survive this.

But you know what, every day that passes and every morning that I wake up, I realize that...

I Am Surviving This!

So Will You!

--Renee Highsmith, TCF Valley Forge Chapter

In memory of my brother, Michael Highsmith

## Letting Go vs. Forgetting

When my brother passed away, I had a difficult time distinguishing between "letting go" and "forgetting". I felt that to let go of T.C. would mean to start forgetting him. Needless to say, I was unwilling to do this. Eventually I learned I could let go without forgetting my brother. Learning to let go was and is a day-to-day process. The memory of my brother is stronger and clearer today because it is not as clouded by pain. With each day there is more acceptance.

The reason I'm sharing this with you is because I used to be very concerned that T.C.'s friends would forget him. It hurt to think of all of them going on with their lives without T.C. My family received visits, cards, and letters when T.C. passed away. Slowly, however, the contact became less and less.

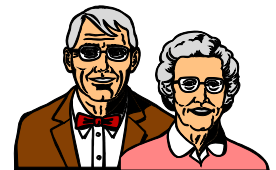
I met a woman the other day who recognized my name. We talked for awhile and I learned that her daughter was very close to my brother. I also learned that her daughter continues to visit the accident site and remembers T.C. and their friendship.

This made me understand that the power of love is stronger than I ever imagined. Not only has my memories of my brother remained clear, but he is remembered by his friends.

I'm sure some of you can understand these feelings and I wanted to share this with you. Maybe it will help you to understand that you can let go without forgetting. Maybe it will remind you that a person lives on in the hearts of many.

--By Judy Cloer' TCF Tampa Fl

## For Grandparents...



### Loss

Life has many losses. My brother and I are the only two remaining people in our family. I have lost my sister to domestic violence, one brother to cancer, another brother to a heart attack. I've had a miscarriage, lost my father when I was 24 and my mother when I was 16.

Truly, one of the hardest losses was that of my sweet granddaughter, Olivia, who was just 14 months old. They say a parent should never have to bury a child. The same can be said about a

grandparent. Not only do I grieve Livie, but I watch the pain my son and his wife experience, as well as her siblings.

Grief is excruciating. There are no easy answers when those we love are hurting. But we can show up and give support to those we love who are grieving.  
--Anne Peterson Anne Peterson is a poet, speaker and published author of 14 books. Anne is well acquainted with grief having lost her parents, 3 siblings, and most recently her baby granddaughter. She wants those who are hurting to know they are not alone. Sign up for her newsletter at [www.annepeterson.com](http://www.annepeterson.com) and receive her free eBook, "Helping Someone in Grief: 17 Things You Need to Know."

## From Our Members...

### Parents

I've learned people don't care how much you know until they know that you care.  
I've learned to avoid judging others so I think what I say, not say what I think.  
I've learned that it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.  
I've learned that a child who has lived just moments can be your greatest teacher.  
I've learned that you can keep going long after you think you can't.  
I've learned that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.  
I've learned that heroes are people who do what needs to be done regardless of their personal circumstances.  
I've learned that learning to forgive takes a lot of practice.  
I've learned that friends can become strangers, and strangers can become friends.  
I've learned that ignorance isn't an excuse for the lack of compassion.  
I've learned that ignorance begets ignorance.  
I've learned that some people will never, ever get it.  
I've learned some people love you dearly, but just don't know how to show it.  
I've learned that true love continues to grow, even over the longest distance.  
I've learned that the community of sorrow is the strongest of all.  
I've learned that it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.



I've learned that no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.  
I've learned that your life can be changed in a matter of minutes.  
I've learned that writing, as well as talking, can ease emotional pains.  
I've learned to trust myself.  
I've learned that the people you care most about in life are taken from you too soon.  
I've learned that you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.  
I've learned that love isn't measured by the amount of time you have with someone.  
I've learned that some sorrow is so deep that it has no words. But so is love.  
What has your child taught you?  
--Author unknown submitted by Linda Curtis

## Prior National Conferences...

### Reflections on The TCF Conference...

I was fortunate to be able to attend the 39<sup>th</sup> National Convention for The Compassionate Friends. There were 1,300 people, in attendance, and everyone, including the speakers had lost either a child, a grandchild, or a sibling. There was an incredible feeling of love, compassion, and acceptance at Convention. There was a Hug Station, that was always busy. The hotel also had two large dogs in the lobby that were available for hugs and comfort, as well.

The variety of workshops and sharing sessions was incredible! It was hard to choose what to attend. I found the workshops I attended informative, as well as emotional. There were so many choices that you could find lots that interested you. There were creative workshops, informative ones, and physical ones (i.e., yoga, exercise, etc.).

--Excerpts by Marie Noble, TCF Providence

### National Compassionate Friends Conference...



We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 49th Annual National Conference in Baltimore, MD! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

For more information and to register, visit:

<https://cvent.me/Wa5GoW>

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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: April first for May 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](mailto: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.



**Four Options To Give:**

- QR code on cell phones.
- Online at [tcfsbla.org/donate-now/](http://tcfsbla.org/donate-now/)
- Cash: Donation box at in-person meetings.



**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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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...**

- Takingtime.org: (424) 634-1956 Grief support for kids 5-11, 12-18, and their families
- Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail [Roseydoll@aol.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org) (310) 483-8313.

### A Note From Your Editor...

We often are asked about local support groups for children. I found out about Taking Time South Bay, and wanted to let you know about them.

### Bereavement Support Groups For Children ages 5-11 & their Parents/Guardians and Caregivers...

Grief is hard — especially for children. Taking Time is here to walk alongside your family. We offer a free 8-week bereavement support program for children ages 5–7, ages 8–11, and their parents/guardians. Groups meet at the same time in separate rooms, so the whole family is supported together.

In a safe, compassionate setting, families connect with others who truly understand — sharing hope, healing, and tools to navigate loss. All groups are led by Licensed Mental Health Professionals and/or Certified Bereavement Educators.

**When:** Tuesdays, 4:00–5:00 PM, April 14 – June 2

**Where:** Beach Cities Health District, 514 N. Prospect Avenue, Suite L6 Redondo Beach, CA 90277

**Pre-registration is required.** For more information and/or to pre-register, please contact Patty Ellis, Certified Grief Educator or Claire Towle, LCSW, Certified in Bereavement and Thanatology at: (424) 634-1956. [info@takingtime.org](mailto:info@takingtime.org)

### Other Grief Support Websites...

[thetearsfoundation.org](http://thetearsfoundation.org)

[goodgriefresources.com](http://goodgriefresources.com)

[bereavedparentsusa.org](http://bereavedparentsusa.org)

[healingafterloss.org](http://healingafterloss.org)

[survivorsofsuicide.com](http://survivorsofsuicide.com)

[taps.org](http://taps.org) (military death)

[save.org](http://save.org) (suicide/depression)

[pomc.com](http://pomc.com) (families of murder victims)

[grasphelp.org](http://grasphelp.org) (substance abuse deaths)

[www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub](http://www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub) (Suicide)

[Griefwords.com](http://Griefwords.com) (for grandparents)



[childloss.com](http://childloss.com)

[griefwatch.dom](http://griefwatch.dom)

[opentohope.com](http://opentohope.com)

[webhealing.com](http://webhealing.com)

[alivealone.org](http://alivealone.org)

[angelmoms.com](http://angelmoms.com)

[M.A.D.D..org](http://M.A.D.D..org)

### 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

Lynn Vines

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Lori Galloway

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Jackie Taos

**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](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

**A Special Thanks to** The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.



# 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.**

*No donations were received this month. Please consider supporting 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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



**APRIL 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.