



# *The Compassionate Friends*

## *South Bay/LA Chapter*

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

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

**May 2026 ISSUE**

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

**OUR NEXT MEETING:**  
will be **May 7th, 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 May 7th newsletter will start with “Challenges In The Month Of May”**

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 May 7th meeting will start with “**Challenges In The Month Of May.**” Will it be a happy day or somber day involving loss. For many bereaved parents, the Month of May and then June, contains three holidays that hold a lot of emotions. May has both Mother’s Day and Memorial Day. And June has Father’s Day, and all three special days evoke emotions and challenge our moods.

It’s ironic that something so wonderful and something so terrible can co-exist within you at the same time. Celebrating in these months can bring us as much pain as happiness. After all, becoming a parent is what made us so much more vulnerable to the pain we are now experiencing. How we handle these two months that are ahead of us will effect us in our grief. The following quote by Deann Koonz takes on a new meaning if you think about it. “Grief can destroy you — or focus you. You can decide a relationship was all for nothing if it had to end in death, and you all alone. *OR*, you can realize that every moment of it had more meaning than you dared to recognize at the time, so much meaning it scared you, so you just lived, just took for granted the love and laughter of each day, and didn’t allow yourself to consider the sacredness of it.” Where do you fall? For many bereaved families facing these occasions can be hard. We invite you to join us at our next meeting as we share ways and thoughts on how to handle them.

## Milestones

A kaleidoscope of images will affect all of us during this month of May, when family celebrations and gathering times abound, most especially Mother’s Day, Memorial Day, and high school graduation. These are days that normally mark milestones and create bonds and memories within families. As so often, the focus on family and children will touch the emptiness we carry inside our beings. It is so hard to come to grips with the ongoing reality of our child’s death. We take it in as we are able, over many months and years, struggling to gain the courage and strength to accept what we cannot change.

Reading about the insights and journeys of other bereaved parents continues to help me in my own healing. Recently, the words of Ann K. Finkbeiner, in “After the Death of a Child: Living with Loss through the Years,” have offered me new

perspectives, understanding, and wisdom.

In her book, Finkbeiner, a bereaved parent and a science writer, explores the long-term, large-scale effects of a child’s death through a series of interviews with bereaved parents. She concludes: “In the end, I learned two things about the long-term effects of losing a child. One is that a child’s death is disorienting. The human mind is wired to find patterns and attach meanings, to associate things that are alike, to generalize from one example to another, in short, to make sense of things. Your mind could no more consciously stop doing this than your heart could consciously stop beating.

But children’s deaths make no sense, have no precedents, are part of no pattern; their deaths are unnatural and wrong. So parents fight their wiring, change their perspectives, and adjust to a reality that makes little sense.

The other thing I learned is that letting go of a child is impossible. One of my earliest and most persistent reactions to T.C.’s death was surprise. I had no idea what so ever, how much he had meant to me. All I knew was that I hadn’t wanted to think about it. Our children are in our blood; the bond with them doesn’t seem to break, and the parents [who were interviewed] found subtle and apparently unconscious ways of preserving that bond. None of this—that children are a central part of parents, are the link between the parent’s past and future, and are tied up with the parent’s own self-image is surprising.

What is surprising is that it’s true. We’re not used to this sort of merger with another person. We’re used to thinking of ourselves as separate individuals; we fall in love, we make alliances, we have obligations, but we do all this as free agents. We choose our own lives and die our own deaths. But we don’t choose our love of, alliance with, or obligations to our children. Our children are much more central; they’re something like our own humanness, or our reasons for being on earth. If children are part of parents, they are not arms or legs, but bones and breath.

Perhaps Ann Finkbeiner’s words will be helpful to you, as they are to me. Perhaps you have other readings to suggest or your own writings to share. I welcome them all for publication in the newsletter (to be published, articles and poems must include the author’s name). In our attempts to make sense of what is senseless, let us continue to hold out our hands to one another in empathy and friendship and in honor of our beautiful children, forever loved and missed.

-- Kitty Reeve TCF Marin and San Francisco, CA



## Missing and Valuing on Mother's Day

Mother's Day is a special day, and special days are hard after the death of a child.

It is a normal and natural thing for either parent for the first few years after the death to zero in on who is missing, rather than who is left... and I was no different.

Fortunately for me, a local psychiatrist, Dr. Victor Gonzales, spoke one evening shortly before Mother's Day. He told of his parents' loss of their first two children. His story of how his life had been influenced and molded by his mother's reaction touched me. He spoke about how he and his sibling who came later, were forever denied his mothers happiness and joy. She was unable to value what she had left as much as what she had lost.

Dr. Gonzales said he spent a great deal of his childhood trying to make his mother happy, always failing and always feeling there must be something lacking in him that caused him to fail. The picture in my mind of him and his sibling always trying and always failing, through no fault of their own, made a great impact on me. I determined from that day forward that my daughter would not have to lament later in life that she had been denied my happiness and joy because her brother had died.

On Mother's Day now I make room for both missing and valuing, for they are not, I have discovered, mutually exclusive. Now when I go to the cemetery with my rosebud on my day, my daughter has no part in my needs while I am there. When I come home, my son doesn't interfere with my acceptance and appreciation of my daughter's expression of love. She gives me a gift on my day, and I give her one in return. It's probably the best gift I could possibly give her ... my happiness and joy for life. She is as important as what I have lost, and I know her worth. If you are fortunate enough to have surviving children, I hope you too, are able to value as well as miss. There's room for both, you know.

-- Mary Cleckley, TCF, Atlanta, GA

## Wisdom

As bereaved mothers, we know the joys and the pain of Mother's Day. Through the life and death of our child, we have loved much and lost much. We



are far better people because of our children. Our wisdom surpasses anything we could have considered possible before our child died, for now we know loss, the darkest places of the human psyche, the deepest valley of the soul, and the depths of insurmountable pain. This wisdom was not chosen by us. It is, nevertheless, our wisdom and experience to share with others as we choose. It is ours to keep in our minds as we live a life without our child. It is the purest wisdom one finds on this side of the moon.

We will continue to learn much about life as we live on after our child has gone. We were active participants in the lives of our children; we must be active participants in the mourning and grief following the deaths of our children. From this experience we grow....it is painful growth, but it is absolute growth of mind and spirit. As our growth increases exponentially, we find that, wondrously, we have come full circle.

One day we choose to focus on the life of our child. When that day comes, as it does for each of us, we are released from the darkness and despair and gently enter into the ambient glow of the light... hope. Tentatively we take our first steps into the light. Then gradually we move with more confidence. The light glows brighter as we accept the healing it provides to us. As we heal, we reach out, we return to life, we work a little harder, love more deeply, and give freely to others. Our perspective turns outward. We will still reflect, but we will not be enveloped by our grief. We will laugh again, we will smile. We will even act spontaneously on occasion. We will live....live in the shining light of hope.

And so, gentle mother, as you mark Mother's Day, think of your child's life. Think of love. Think of times passed and those to come. Think of your journey. Think about your vast wisdom. Think about hope. You are a remarkable work in progress. Think about that.

Peace to you on Mother's Day,  
--Annette Mennen Baldwin TCF, Katy, TX

## Can Memorial Day Be Both a Day of Celebration and Remembrance?

The stores are also crowded with people preparing for activities to celebrate the beginning of summer. The roads leading to area beaches are backlogged with traffic. Cookouts and family fun activities are planned. The department stores are advertising great Memorial Day sales on summer

gear. Our local newspapers have published special sections to list weekend nightlife, music, and arts events.

I read an article recently by one who strongly opposes celebrating summer festivities on a day designed for solemn remembrance. The writer questions, "When did we begin to make this a day of fun?" Since childhood, my family combined the two, visiting the cemetery to pay respects in the morning and continuing the day by celebrating the beginning of summer with family and friends. I agree that we should pay special tribute to those who paid the price for our freedom. We should also support the military families who've lost loved ones. Oftentimes, their grief journey encompasses so much more than we recognize, such as moving away from the military families that they have always known.

If you know families or friends who have experienced loss (military and non-military), consider reaching out and offering support this Memorial Day weekend and beyond. A telephone call to say "I'm thinking of you" just might brighten someone's day.

Since we are all unique individuals, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve, there is no right or wrong way to remember, honor, and celebrate. Follow your heart and do what feels right for you this Memorial Day weekend. As always, I encourage you to cherish the memories and embrace the future.

Happy Memorial Day!

--Dora Carpenter

## Sore Losers

It is very hard, if not altogether impossible, to accept the death of one's child with grace. Now, as another season of rebirth and renewal springs forth, I find myself once again, having to swallow an underlying bitterness that I manage, with some difficulty, to keep under cover most of the year. Spring is here once again. Trees are bursting, flowers are sprouting, children are outside playing and love is blooming. It is a truly irresistible time of year.

And yet, despite my love of the garden and the weather and the magic of nature, I feel an unmistakable sense of anger for all that my child is missing and the joy his loss has robbed me of feeling. Loss like ours, makes us angry. My anger is one thing I cannot and will not relinquish. I carry it as an internal torch that alternately flares and

dims with each season, each memorable date, each cataclysmic event reported in the news, every careless comment, every celebration.

Losing this big leaves an unrelenting wound on the soul. Though time may have passed and the sting may have eased, special times cause the anger to bubble up just under the skin. Once there, it doesn't take much to wrench us back into that momentary despair.

Spring can do that. Including as it does, Mother's Day and Father's Day. Then again, time has also worked for me. It has taught me to understand my anger, to keep it whole but in its place and, even while holding on to it, live my life as fully as possible. I've learned to contain my anger, acknowledge it, take it out now and then and put it away most of the time.

Situations and people who cannot help but arouse unwelcome emotion, be they friends, acquaintances or family, are avoided whenever possible. Enjoying what I have, rather than focusing on all I've lost has become my goal. And having had Peter, such an unmitigated joy in my life, knowing he was mine, understanding finally the impact he has had on me, in making me who I am today, is an amazing realization. For every day I live now, I live to the max...for me and for him.

Every sunset, every snowfall, every book, every movie, every flower, every little living thing delights me...a delight that is more intense for having had the miracle that was Peter in my life and for having had to deal with his leaving. And though a loss of such magnitude leaves the soul sore for all of time, knowing how much there is to lose makes everything we have left so much more precious.

Treasure the time. We'll all be together again. A peaceful Mother's Day and Father's Day to you all.

-- Marie Levine

## Graduation - A Time to Remember



I was driving down the road the other day, thinking of how the retail market makes any event an opportunity for revenue. Graduation seems to fall into that category, with cards and gifts for every Graduate. This time of year reminds me that my graduation from high school was a bittersweet time. Really, it was the first time I had "surpassed" my older brother, David, in anything significant. I turned the age that he was when he died, 18, in the beginning of my senior year of high school. That

year was difficult for me, as I felt that I was getting to move past where he had been cut short.

Graduation day was no exception.

I was happy to be getting out of high school, and looking forward to that coming August when I would go to college. But why was I getting to do these things, and not David? What made me so special that I got to stay here and experience these things? I still am not quite sure of the answer to those questions.

Graduation from high school was really just the first of many events which I have gotten to experience that David never will. College graduation, my wedding, and the birth of my two children are examples. And for me, each event has been a bit bittersweet.

The good news is this: that while time does make it easier to bear day-to-day activities without your sibling, each major event in your life presents itself as a new opportunity to remember your brother or sister, as well. For me, figuring that out was a huge relief, as it meant that my fear of forgetting David was not something I needed to worry about any more. His memory is just as alive for me to-day, 15-1/2 years later, as it was when I took that walk across the stage to accept my high school diploma.

-- Amy Baker Ferry TCF Heart of Florida Chapter

## The Compassionate Friends is for Sharing

Many people may think that meetings of The Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are more concerned that we be

there for the parents, siblings or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

--Jackie Wesley Miami-Whitewater TCF

## For James on Memorial Day



This Memorial Day, we remember you. Not as a soldier who fought a battle, read about

between the pages of our history book. Not as a soldier who fought for his country, for values and a way of life worth preserving.

We remember you, as a soldier on the battlefield of life, valiantly struggling through your own personal war, a war none of us were aware of. And all of us would have taken up arms for in your cause. We would have rallied, given muskets of courage, cannons of patience, barrels of understanding, rifles loaded with love and compassion. But you didn't let us know we needed to come to your aid, we didn't know you were on the battlefield all alone.

The dragons of despair, the monsters of melancholy, the shadows of stress and the presence of pressures. We would have slayed them, we would have lessened their ability to lead you astray from a life full of hope, promise and love.

But now we remember you, this Memorial Day, for you valiantly fought a battle we're only vaguely aware of. You were our little soldier, our happy, carefree, confident, companion. We wish we could have helped you, but this was just one battle you had to selfishly fight by yourself.

Your battle is over, but we're now engaged in a war of grief without end. However, because of the joyous years of your short life, and the tragedy of the day it ended, we have learned that life is short, precious and not to be taken for granted. We need to reach out to friends, help others along this journey, help and heal ourselves and those we love and care about. We treasure our memories of you and of our times together; we remember you with love. But most of all, James, we will forever love you, miss you and remember you always.

-- Meg Avery, TCF Atlanta Online

**“A Love That Endures”**

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 a love that endures,  
a love that I'll always feel.



In my heart, I'll always hold,  
The memory of you, so precious and bold.  
A guardian angel, watching from above,  
A love that endures, a love filled with love.

Though we may never hold you or see you grow,  
Your memory will always be, a warm and loving glow.

A love so strong, a bond so true,  
Forever in our hearts, my baby, we'll carry you.  
--Baby Loss Awareness newsletter

**Newly Bereaved...****Recognizing Unsuccessful Grief**

All of us who have searched for healing following the death of a child, grandchild or sibling know the roller coaster of emotions that are part of our grief process. We know there is no "quick fix" that magically lets us get on with our lives, and grief can be physically exhausting. We cannot go back to what was! And time, in and of itself, does not heal.

Although there is no set schedule for grieving and there will always be a hole in our hearts, many of us in TCF have found that within a year to 18 months, we are beginning to make some progress—granted the progress may seem minute to the bereaved. Grief therapists have learned that if death is from prolonged or serious illness there is grieving during the illness. The second year of grief may be as intense or even more emotionally devastating than the first year. However, no two people have the same grief timetable.

If we feel that we are not making progress, is there some way to determine whether or not we may need professional help or evaluation or at least reassurance? The following considerations may help you decide:

Extended withdrawal from the world around you and prolonged inability to accomplish normal tasks or participate in everyday activities.

Self-imposed isolation where you do not want to

be around anyone—friends, family or others.

Becoming too scared to be alone. You must have someone around all the time.

Anger or guilt that (a) is out of proportion, (b) does not fit the circumstances, (c) extends for a long time without retreating, or (d) may be directed toward or imposed on others close to you.

Depression that is exaggerated, unremitting, prolonged and occurs in original intensity years after the loss.

Anxiety that interferes with going away from home.

Dependence on alcohol or medications to cope or forget.

An emotional "logjam" resulting from an accumulation of losses over the years.

Contemplating or attempting suicide to "get away from it all" or to join your child.

Self-caused illness or physical health problems that do not go away, or the inability to separate the real from the imagined. This kind of illness is different from the "ailments" that most of us experience during the anniversary of our loved one's death.

Placing your child on a pedestal and forgetting his/her imperfections; or being unable to redirect your activities or to shift your focus, so that you can honor your child in a positive way.

An absence of grief or a numbness, anxiety, sadness, or any kind of overall attitude that negatively affects others around you, including over-protectiveness of your loved ones.

Converting all emotions into one or two favorite or "safe" emotions—like anger, boredom, or despair—which become all you are feeling, taking the place of grief.

When talking does not seem to help or there is no one able to listen.

--Libbyrose D. Clark TCF, Deep East Texas  
From information provided by Vera Baron, LPC,  
and Ray Johnson, CSW

**Seasoned Grievers...****Spring Ahead**

It is Spring once again. A time of renewal and rebirth. It is also a time of re-invention. As those difficult Mother's Day and Father's Day commemorations approach, I am once again shaking my head...this will be my thirtieth Mother's Day without my son. Where did the years go? And who am I now, so different from the woman I was in

1993.

Several years ago, a newly grieving father sat in our circle and plaintively asked when he would be himself again. As if there was ever a possibility of that. I remember the group telling him that while he felt as if he had shattered into a million pieces, time would eventually enable him to “put himself back together”. But like a vase that’s been glued together, he would always bear the scars of the injury. He would never be like his old self again.

We are always under that pressure. Our families, our friends long for us to recover. They pray we will once again be like our old selves. But we know we never will. We can become a fairly recognizable facsimile...but there will always be the difference between knowing what we now know and the old innocent souls we were.

People still ask innocently, if I have children. I don’t hesitate any longer when I tell them my son is dead. They still reel. I don’t. They still say, “I don’t know how you do it.” I still wonder what “it” is that I do. I guess the fact is that I “do” life. What choice do I have? I holed up a long time in my despair. I missed a lot of sunrises and sunsets. Then one day, I felt like Peter was watching me and he wasn’t happy. I think I realized then that I was living for two and I made a Herculean effort to re-engage in the world. I’m glad now, that I did. Eternity will come soon enough.

The Spring used to mock me. In spite of the hurt and anger I felt, the world seemed to leap at the opportunity to heal and regenerate after a cold dark winter. I felt like an outsider everywhere. Winter hung on my soul like a shroud. It’s different today. I realize that I have traveled a very great distance from the disconnected, grieving person I was then. Time has indeed made a very big difference. Now I know Peter is with me every day, accompanying me on an imaginable journey, cheering me on, waiting for me, proud of my little successes. I miss his presence, sharing with him, touching him, hearing him laugh, listening to his plans. I wonder always what he would be doing if he were living his life. Would he be married? Where would his career path have taken him by now? What car would he be driving? Where would he be living?

But I look at the wonderful relationships I’ve developed in the past thirty years as gifts from Peter. Surely it was he who arranged for my friendship with the young couple whose two little children (now grown) I love and refer to as my adopted grandchildren. And certainly it was Peter

who maneuvered a young handsome man into our lives, who became like an adopted son to us, complete with the emotional ups and downs of failed romances and the growing pains of early lost love. Tom, now a man in full, married with a young son who calls me Nana.

Now retired and widowed, the garden remains my refuge. It is here, alone with the birds and the bugs, that I am most at peace. I talk to Peter and sometimes I can almost hear him responding. I delight in seeing the garden come back to life. It is a constant in a world rocked by insanity. I grieve for all the newly bereaved parents who must now travel this same path. I am so different from the person I was. I’m more forgiving of those whose challenges often cause them to make poor decisions. And I’m more impatient with those who don’t see the “big picture” and squander their precious time as though they had a thousand years to live. Judgmental before my world was rocked, I now feel entitled to my impatience. Now I forgive myself first.

It’s Spring. The continuum of life abounds. It seems distinctly possible I’ve been here before. And just as possible, as the perennials that surround me, I’ll be back again.

-- Marie Levine

## Friends and Family...

### There is No Better Friend

For over 40 years, I have had the best friend you could ever have. When I told my best friend that I was fat, she never said, “I just lost three pounds without even trying.” When we went to a sock hop together in college and she was offered a ride home, she never ditched me.

When I gave myself a home permanent and left it on too long, she was the only one to sit with me in the bathroom until it grew out. When I told my best friend my husband gave me two snow tires for our anniversary, she never said, “You should be happy he remembered.”

When I was pregnant and my stomach looked like a tray on a car door in a drive-in, she never said, “There’s a glow about a pregnant woman.” When I had a miscarriage and everyone else in the world said, “There will be other babies.” She cried with me over the one I lost.

When she told me she was staying home for the summer, I wouldn’t have dreamed of sending her a



card from Spain telling her what a great time I was having. When her mixer broke down, I never asked her if she had sent in the warranty card so she'd be covered. When I moved 3,000 miles away, she never once told me what I was doing to her. When her mother died, I never said, "She had a rich, full life and she was in her 70s."

When I argued with my husband and begged her advice, she kept her mouth shut. She just listened. When we couldn't get a sitter and had to bring the kids along to her house for dinner, she never fell apart. When I left my first autographing party and no one showed up, she never once suggested, "They probably didn't see the ad." When her political candidate lost and mine won, I never said, "Ha, ha, I told you so." Every time we got together, neither of us had to say, "I'm glad to see you."

Recently, my best friend lost her child. He was her youngest and was in his 20s. I listened to her. I cried with her. I felt pain that I had never known I could feel before. But not once did I say to her, "I know how you feel."

--Erma Bombeck



## Helpful Hint...

### Evolving Through Grief

When you start to feel your sanity slip, do whatever positive thing you can think of to hold on: pray, meditate, go get a full body massage at a spa, scream at a starlit sky, take a trip to a new place, stare at sunsets, lay in an open field and watch the clouds drift, or do all of these things at once. Just do something for you! And don't feel guilty about being selfish about it. You can't do anything for others if you don't take care of yourself first. You can't be loving to others if you aren't loving to yourself first. Then, when you start to feel a sense of renewal, think about extending the love you still want to express for your child in a way that will benefit others.

--Roe Zicarello TCF Bluegrass KY newsletter

## Welcome...



### Why Do I Come to Bereaved Parents Meetings?

A family member recently asked me why I continue to come to Bereaved Parents meetings?

She said, "After all, it's been 5 years since your son died. Don't you find it depressing to go to those meetings?" I stopped and thought for just a minute... it is incredibly sad to hear the stories of loss and pain, but it does not depress me. I ache for those families whose loss is more recent, where the pain is a heart savagely torn into raw pieces and where the pain seems relentless and like it will last forever. But had I not had the support of this group, I wonder if I would have made it, and kept my sanity, through the past 5 years. I know for certain that my grief journey, as hard as it has been, was made easier, and my burden lighter, because it was shared by those who truly understood my loss and who constantly reassured me that I was not losing my mind...I was just grieving.

I have personally been blessed by a supportive family and by loyal friends at church and at work who, even after 5 years, send me cards or flowers or call or e-mail to see how I am doing. And I am grateful for their support. But somehow there is nothing quite like the hug of another bereaved parent and the tears that mingle with mine as we grieve together the death of our own child and our friend's child. I can't explain it. I can only be grateful to have experienced this amazing support that has made this unending grief journey bearable.

I can share laughter and tears at the same time with parents who understand the guilt that accompanies those first moments of laughter. It seems like a betrayal of our children...even though we know that they would want us to go on and they would not want us to be miserable. A friend who was recently widowed told me just today that she was so sorry that I had the grief experience to be able to comfort her and yet she was inexplicably comforted by the fact that she was not alone in her grief...that there were others who understood even a portion of what she was feeling.

I know what she means. I felt that way the first time I came to a meeting and every time I have come since then. I would not have chosen the pain of this loss and yet I would not want those whose children have recently died to not have the loving support that others gave to me when I thought I could not stand another day, another minute of the pain of our loss.

And so we continue to come monthly...to meet, to hug, to cry, to laugh to listen and to try to understand another's story. And we come to love each other's children that we never got to meet. Their faces become almost as familiar as our own

children's countenance and so incredibly dear because they were so special to our friends. In sharing our children's lives and their deaths, they continue to live on through our stories and our pictures and we are comforted as we grieve together.

--Charlotte Miller

## Book In Review...

Afterlife Agreements—A Gift From Beyond by Chris Mulligan. Is there life after death? Do you live after someone's death? Both of you can, the griever and the deceased. This book will demonstrate that life is eternal and you can choose life after the death of a loved one. Healing and grief journeys will be as distinct as individuals. Death does not end connections with our loved ones. You can choose life after the death of a loved one and learn to live differently.

## Thoughts on Mother's Day

Oh, go away, sweet month of May  
I just can't handle you today.  
Flowers blooming all around,  
new life springs from the ground.  
How can this possibly be  
with my precious child gone from me?  
On my lips one sweet name.  
will Mother's Day ever be the same?  
Of course it won't, but maybe I,  
for his sake shall give it a try,  
to allow my grief to be held at bay  
by the blessings of the month of May.  
-- Ruth Gregory, TCF, Phoenix, AZ



## Dearest Mommy...

When you wonder the meaning of life and love  
know that I am with you.  
Close your eyes and feel me kissing you in the  
gentle breeze across your cheek.  
When you begin to doubt that you shall ever see  
me again quiet your mind and hear me,  
I am in the whisper of the heavens speaking of  
your love.  
When you lose your identity  
When you question who you are and where you  
are going, open your heart and see me.  
I am the twinkle in the stars smiling down upon  
you, lighting the path for your journey.

When you awaken each morning not remembering  
your dreams but feeling content and serene  
know that I was with you –  
Filling your night with thoughts of me.  
When you linger in the remnant pain  
Wholeness seeming so unfamiliar  
Think of me and know that I am with you,  
touching you through the shared tears of a gentle  
friend easing the pain.  
As the sunrise illuminates the desert sky  
In the breathtaking glory, awaken your spirit  
Think of our time, all too brief, but ever brilliant.  
When you were certain of us, together  
When you were certain of your destiny.  
Know that God created that moment in time, just for  
us.  
Dearest Mommy, I am with you always.  
--Joanne Cacciatore

## A POEM...

We are connected, my child and I  
by an invisible cord  
not seen by the eye.  
It's not like the cord  
That connects us 'til birth  
This cord can't be seen  
by any on earth.  
This cord does its work  
right from the start.  
It binds us together  
attached to my heart.  
I know that it's there  
though no one can see  
the invisible cord  
from my child to me.  
The strength of this cord  
man could create.  
It withstands the test,  
can hold any weight.  
And though you are gone,  
though you're not here with me,  
the cord is still there  
but no one can see.  
It pulls at my heart.  
I am bruised, I am sore.  
But this cord is my lifeline  
as never before.  
I am thankful that nature  
connects us this way.  
A mother and child  
death can't take away  
~author unknown

**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**

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

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 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

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

Finley Ward  
Born: 1/06 Died: 3/26  
Mother: Stacey Ward

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



## Our Children Remembered



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

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.)

## Birthday Tribute



Sorry, no tributes were submitted this month.

## By Siblings...



### I Cry— I Smile

I cry when I think of how much I miss my brother! I cry when I long to hear his voice, or see him come around a corner. I cry when I think about all the times we won't be sharing anymore – holidays, birthdays, family times. I cry when I think about the wonderful person he was and how many more incredible things he could have accomplished if he were still here. I cry when I think of his pain and I think of why it had to happen to someone so undeserving of it. I cry when I think about my own two children, and the uncle they will never get to truly know, and the fun times they will never get to have. I cry when I think of the pain and hurt I see in my parents as they endure the suffering caused from losing a child. I cry when I think of the pain my sister and I share as we work through the loss of our brother.

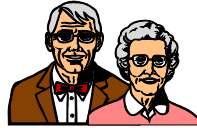
I smile when I think of the thirty years of great times we had together. I smile when I think of how happy we were to get a little brother. I smile when I think of how I respected him, as he grew up to be an outstanding young man, Marine and police officer. I smile when I think of his humor, outgoing personality and awesome smile. I smile when I think of our last times together and the talks we had and the support he was there to lend. I smile when I think of the all-too-few good years my children got to spend with their Uncle Denny. I smile when I think of all the people he touched and the lives to which he made such a difference. I smile when I think of how proud my family has always been of my brother. I smile when I think of how loved my brother is and always will be, no matter where he is. I smile when I think of how lucky I am to have gotten to have someone like my brother in my life, no matter how far-too-short our time was together. I smile when I think of him watching over me, and being with me wherever I go, in my heart, where he will never be forgotten.

Don't cry because it's over – smile because it happened!

-- Kelly Mallory Hermann, Western NY

## For Grandparents...

### Grandparent's Grief



A grandparent's grief can be a complicated journey. Your grief is twofold. Not only are you mourning the loss of your grandchild, you have also lost a part of your son or daughter that will never be the same. Many grandparents feel a sense of helplessness because they are unable to prevent the anguish their own child feels. Life may now seem more fragile and unfair than ever. It is normal to feel unequipped to adequately support your child while also experiencing your own grief.

The relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild can be incredibly special and unique. A grandparent's grief may not always be recognized or supported, but it is there. It is vital for grandparents to give themselves permission to grieve and to focus on their own needs. You are also grieving your personal relationship with your grandchild, and their death has created a hole in your life that cannot be filled by anyone else.

No one expects to outlive their own children, much less their grandchildren. Reactions of guilt and anger can be intermingled. Grandparents may experience survivor guilt because it seems unnatural to outlive a grandchild, and they may express the wish that they "could change places" with the deceased child.

Grandparents may also experience generational differences in the expression of grief or struggle with limited support systems of their own as people in their community may not even be aware of the death. As a grandparent, it is important for you to acknowledge your grief while separating it from your child's grief. Seeking out support for yourself will help you in respecting and supporting your child as they grieve in their own way.

--www.missingpiecesgrief.org

### Prior National Conferences...

#### Top Twenty Things I've Learned From TCF Conferences Over The Last Eight Years

We are not alone.

1. I am forever Jeff's Mom.
2. Share don't compare.
3. Cultivate gratitude for the time you had with your child.
4. Every loss is unique just as every child is different

from the other.

5. There is no word in English for who we are now, but there is a wordless communion among us.
6. Nature is wordless too.
7. There is no single right or wrong way to grieve. Everyone grieves differently.
8. Time doesn't heal, it's what you do with the time.
9. You can grieve in solitude but grieving in community will lighten your burden. Both are needed.
10. There will be surprises on this journey.
11. Joy will find us again but it will be a slow discovery, drop by drop.
12. We will never love this loss but a changed life will follow and it will be ok.
13. Along the way we learn to reach out to the newly bereaved.
14. Writing is one way of holding your loved one close but there are many other ways too.
15. You must risk love again and again and again.
16. We honor the memory of our child when we grieve, we honor their memory when we grow.
17. We will be ambushed from time to time and grief will erupt in some form again.
18. Grief is a practice that will never end but it will become less intense and soften as time goes on.
19. Learn to savor and cherish all memories.
20. Tears are a gift.

--Pat Timpanaro, Jeff's Mom

### 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: May first for June 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 [tcf-sbla.org/donate-now/](http://tcf-sbla.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)

**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

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)



# 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.**

In loving memory of all our children. As we focus on Mother’s Day and Memorial Day this month, please remember that our children didn’t just die. They also lived and they left us many beautiful memories. Memories that we will cherish for the rest of our lives....

\*\*\*\*\*

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



**MAY 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.