



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Families After a Child Dies



South Bay/L.A. Chapter



A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND FAMILIES

FEB. 2012 ISSUE

EDITOR: LYNN VINES (310) 530-3214

e-mail Lynntcf@aol.com

OUR NEXT MEETING

will be February 1st, the first Wednesday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

The Neighborhood Church
415 Paseo Del Mar
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274
(South of Torrance Beach)

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

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. → Meetings are held at the west end of the church.

--Please remember to park in the church parking lot and not on the street.--

WHO ARE WE...

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen, to share, and to support each other in the resolution of our grief. You need not walk alone, we are The Compassionate Friends.

FEBRUARY...

This month's topic will start with "Healing From Your Broken Heart".

Upcoming Events: July 20-22: TCF 35th National Conference
Hotel reservations are filling up fast. Get yours in. See pg. 16 for more information.

TCF Lunch Group meets for lunch at Mimi's Café every Friday at 1:00. (Crenshaw and PCH). All members are invited.

Picture Buttons of your child are available. Call Ken at (310) 544-6690.

South Bay/LA Chapter of TCF
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171
(310) 963-4646
www.tcfsbla.org

Chapter Leaders:
Cheryl Stephens
(323) 855-2630
www.mymeischka@yahoo.com

The National Office of TCF
P.O. Box 3696
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
Toll free (877) 969-0010
<http://www.compassionatefriends.org>



February 1st meeting..... "Healing from Your Broken Heart"

What is the condition of your heart?"

When you are newly bereaved, you often feel like you have a broken heart that will never heal. With time and grief work, you will learn how to replace that pain and suffering with hope and a sense of peace that you can probably not fathom at this point in your grief.

This meeting, we have invited several "veteran" bereaved parents to share how they overcame their pain and started to look forward to a new life that did not revolve around their grief. This is a meeting you don't want to miss. We will discuss the different ways we start the healing process and proceed with the many conflicting feelings of grief. We invite you to join us as we discuss the paths we took to go from a broken heart, overwhelmed with grief, to a life that can again hold hope for the future.

Healing – The Best Memorial

For a long time after the death of a child, bereaved parents are convinced that healing will never occur, and that the loneliness, anger, guilt, and despair, all of which now control life so completely, will never change. This feeling is so strong that when others try to reassure the grieving one, the response is usually, "It's different with me! You don't understand".

This is the "normal" response to what is probably the most severe stress a human will ever face. However, fortunately, there are compassionate friends who once felt this same way and who have learned, out of the morass of loneliness, anger, guilt, and despair, there finally arises a ray of hope which, though small and fleeting at first, becomes the light which leads the wounded parents through the dark valley and into acceptance of their child's death. This will occur even though there is still no understanding of "why".

By working through our guilt (both real and imagined), facing our anger (including anger at God and even at the dead child), crying our way through our despair (with carefully chosen professional help, if necessary), the loneliness will lessen and hope will be seen as surviving when it was thought to be gone forever. Each

one must use one's spiritual beliefs in his or her own way to assist in this process.

Full recovery, in the sense that the effects of grief will finally disappear not to return, does not occur, even though the term "recovery" is used. I prefer the term "healing", meaning a process whereby our lives return to what is now that be normal for us. Healing implies our accepting the unacceptable (the death of our child), and our learning to slowly resume productive relationships with others. This is all done while we continue to love and miss the dead child.

Since we still love the children who have died, we will still experience grief, but it will no longer control our lives. Just as we cannot stop the flashbacks which occur so suddenly and unexpectedly during grief, neither can we prevent healing from occurring. We may slow the process by failing to do our grief work (refusing to face our bereaved state), but we cannot stop it!

One of the greatest hindrances to our health is the fear that our dead children will be forgotten by others. We will not forget them, nor will they be forgotten by others, even though we may not realize it at the time.

A major obstacle to healing is the failure to forgive: ourselves, the dead child, others involved in the child's death, even God, if we hold Him responsible. For only through forgiveness and forgiving are we truly able to handle our guilt and the anger that comes from the guilt we presume in others.

We enhance the healing process when we do our grief work, when we have gratitude for the time we had with our child, when we recall the happy times we experienced with our child (or during pregnancy, if necessary), and when we pick up the shattered pieces of our existence (as our child would want us to do), slowly resuming productive living.

No matter where you are in the journey toward healing, bolster the hope that arises within you. Your healing is probably the best memorial you may erect to your dead child.

—Robert Gloor, MD Tuscaloosa, AL

"Life is eternal,
And love is immortal,
And death is only a horizon: And a horizon is
nothing save the limit of our own sight."

--Rossiter Worthington Raymond

FEBRUARY: an Arrow Through the Heart



In the month of February, we are still in the firm grip of winter. Bone-chilling winds whip around bleak, bare trees, gray days alternate with bright, blue skies, but give little warmth. Having survived January, we have learned to conserve our energy, and we have grown accustomed to the weather.

Though we may still intensely dislike the wintertime, we have learned to take pleasure in the bright sun and the clear, blue sky. The stark landscape may even be appreciated for its unique beauty.

Why does this happen? Why do we accept the bundling up and the shivering of winter? How is it that we can find pleasure and beauty in our misery? The answer is a paradox; We have a choice, and we have no choice. We can continue to wish for balmy air, laden with the scent of flowers, or we can mumble about the cold and grumble about the necessity for bundling up to face the chilly days.

If we focus only on what we don't have, or long for the past warmth of summer or the future rebirth of spring, we tend to lose any ability to notice the aspects of this month that might engender some pleasure.

Try as we might, it is impossible to change the course of nature. We cannot bring back the summer anymore than we can fast-forward the seasons. By focusing on what no longer is, we lose the capacity to find beauty, happiness, or pleasure. If we continue to bang our heads against unchangeable situations, it only increases our feelings of helplessness and futility.

Our alternative is acceptance. By February, we recognize that hoping, wishing, and dreaming will not bring back the summer's warmth, so we accept what is. We learn to live with reality of the situation. It's not that we don't remember the various beautiful times of the summer, it's not that we don't yearn at times for them again; but now, we recognize that has passed. Though our souls may be warmed by the memories of summer, summer is gone.

Now, we are free to live in the reality that is today. We enable ourselves to find beauty and

joy in February. The mid-winter landscape has a quieter and more tranquil beauty. Rarely flamboyant, it does not overwhelm the senses: and the ability to recognize and appreciate this soft beauty can give us a sense of peace.

The month of February is similar to the completion of that long, middle phase of bereavement that results in acceptance of what has occurred. The memories of precious times will always be there to warm our hearts, and they will continue to bring tears and pangs of yearning, but realization of the finality of the loss had also occurred. It takes a long time to accept situations that we do not want as permanent. It takes much time and heartache to recognize that we cannot change situations. It is a long process during which evolves a changed concept of ourselves, the world, and our place in it.

It is not that the world has really changed, but with the death of a loved one OUR world has changed. Again, we have a choice. That long and painful middle portion of the bereavement process may remain with us for a very long time as we struggle to maintain our old ways of being in spite of the agonizing loss. If we become fixed or stuck at this time, there is a double tragedy. Life is lived in the past, and the present is filled with yearning for what should have been and what has been stolen from the survivor. Certainly, we are not "happy" about the situation, but slowly we realize that things will never again be the same and that as survivors, we must go on. After a time, which varies from situation to situation, we accept the finality of the loss. With this acceptance, the ability occurs to perceive beauty without feelings of disloyalty.

Though Valentine's Day does not have the same tradition and resultant dread of Christmas and other holidays, it can still bring a great deal of pain. The very symbol of this day, Cupid's arrow piercing the heart, can feel quite literal for the bereaved whose hearts feel as if they have been broken. Old, tattered, cherished cards will be wept over, as well as bits of lace, red satin ribbon, and the poetry of a spouse, parent, or sibling that is especially precious.

Red roses and red valentine hearts are symbolic of the invisible blood that the bereaved have shed over their loss. When we feel despondent, isolated or cheated on Valentine's Day (or any other day), the pain we are feeling

is because of the great love we had. The experience of that love will never die, the memory of that love, of that loved one, will live on in our hearts.

We must now live on-for the sake of ourselves and our loved one. We must give ourselves permission to enjoy again, even through tears. Let's remind ourselves of the blessings that we have had, despite the deprivation, and let's not deny others their blessings.

We should seek things that will bring us peace. A snow-covered landscape can be beautiful, glistening, and pure. Any view of the situation takes on the meaning that we assign to it. If we choose to believe that a scene or a situation is bleak, it will be bleak. If we focus on one aspect of beauty, we see beauty. NO THERE ISN'T THE COMPLETENESS OF FORMER TIMES, BUT THERE IS TODAY.

-- Susan Arlen, M.D.

Dr. Arlen is the medical director of the Hospice at Somerset Medical Center. She is board certified in rehabilitation medicine, and she is a psychotherapist, specializing in the losses associated with death, disability, and life-changing illness.

Special Days

With Valentine's Day approaching, we are once again faced with the fact that our loved ones are gone at a special time of the year - no more wacky notes, no more silly or romantically beautiful cards, no more flowers and candy, no more special looks and smiles that wordlessly say so much. The special way we acknowledged Valentine's Day with our loved ones is only a memory now. Even if we never especially noticed or celebrated Valentine's Day before, we are still faced with change - realizing that the opportunity to make the day special for our loved ones is gone, too.

Now we are engulfed in sadness and loneliness with confusing thoughts, moods, and feelings whirling around us. We may feel like a storm has caught us in its midst and will never release us. All our relationships with the people around us-family members, co-workers, friends-have changed, taking on new colors and tones. We seek things we cannot seem to grasp-clarity of thought, daily routines we followed so easily in

the past, a sense of security, peacefulness, loving and being loved by the one who has died. We beat ourselves with the "I should have's" and the "if only's." We know death has changed us, and our whole world is different now. Out of the wreckage of our sadness how can we find the ability to acknowledge our loved ones in a special way on Valentine's Day?

Whether our memories of this day in years past are fond (or perhaps even painful with unfulfilled wishes, expectations, and promises), we can begin to recognize the simplest and perhaps most meaningful view of Valentine's Day. We can begin to love ourselves more deeply and truly and offer this as a memorial to the death of our beloved child, all of which takes more effort than we may at first realize.

We must be willing to look deep into ourselves— beneath our loneliness, pain, guilt, and self-accusations. We must be willing to find our self-love, self-kindness and self-compassion, to begin to smile again at memories of that special person who now lies deep in our heart. And we must allow ourselves to relinquish some of our anger at being powerless and less than perfect.

We can take this journey searching through the layers of our personality until we see and give tribute to our wisdom, serenity, faith, and understanding. We can love ourselves and allow ourselves to be loved. This may be the greatest contribution our loved one's death makes in our lives - freeing us to live and love more fully in their memories.

--Patricia C. Andrus, Lafayette, LA



"In this world of ours sorrow comes to all....it comes with bittersweet agony ... Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better.... and yet this is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say."

-- Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln had four sons. Edward died at age 4. William died at age 11. Thomas "Todd" died at age 18.



The Old Mom

During our meeting, one mother stated that her teenage daughter said, "You're not like the old mom."

Recently, I overheard two friends who had not seen each other in a year. After awhile one said to the other, "Well, you haven't changed any."

Is that what is so threatening about bereaved parents? We've changed. The status quo provides predictability, stability, and security. Change is a loss of predictability, a disequilibrium. Our friends, neighbors, coworkers, family, and children want us back as quickly as possible. But the "old us" will never return.

Any major event in one's life - marriage, birth, death - brings about change, and we are never our "old selves" again. But, in time, our "new selves" can be better, more loving, more sensitive, understanding, and compassionate. Adversity brings either bitterness or betterment. No major event leaves us unchanged.

--TCF, Greater Ozarks Chapter, Springfield, IL

Ten Self-Compassionate Principles: The Mourner's Code

Though you should reach out to others as you journey through grief, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain "rights" no one should try to take away from you. The following list is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

1. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. When you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.
2. You have the right to talk about your grief. Talking about grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want as often as you want. You also have the right to be silent.
3. You have the right to feel a multitude of emotions. Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, and relief are a few of the emotions you might

feel. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry is wrong. Find listeners who will accept your feelings without condition.

4. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feeling of loss will probably leave you fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest, eat balanced meals. Don't allow others to push you into things you don't feel ready for.

5. You have the right to experience "griefbursts". Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This is normal and natural.

6. You have the right to make use of ritual. The funeral helps provide you with the support of caring people. It is a way for you to mourn. Don't listen to those that tell you rituals are unnecessary.

7. You have the right to embrace your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate for you. Be around people who understand.

8. You have the right to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking "Why"? Some questions may have answers others may not. Watch out for cliched responses. Comments like "It was God's will" are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.

9. You have the right to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of your child. Find others with whom you can share them.

10. You have the right to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Be patient and tolerant of yourself. Avoid people who are not tolerant with you.

--Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D, from *Understanding Your Grief, 2003*

"... It is not the struggle itself that lays us low. It is the day-in, day-out tenacious. Clinging to the amorphous anger, the depression, the unacceptability of it all that stands to defeat us in the end. When a loved one dies, we survive the death. The question is whether or not we will survive dealing with the death ..."

Scarred by Struggle, Transformed by Hope
By Joan D. Chittister

Who Was That Person? An 8 Year Retrospective



him anymore.

--Rich Edler, TCF South Bay/L/A, California

A Man

Who was that person? He looks like me. He talks like me. But I don't think I know him anymore.

Who was that person? He had so many friends. He was popular at cocktail parties and told good jokes. Today, he seeks out one person he can really talk to, and that is enough. His telephone Rolodex is a lot smaller, but so much more important.

Who was that person? He had such different priorities. He skated over life, like an ice skater on a frozen pond. He never thought about how cold the water was. Now he has a totally new perspective on the world. He reaches out to people who are hurt because he knows how they feel. He has been there. He has felt the ice water.

Who was that person? He had an orderly chronological sense of time. Now the world is divided forever into simply "before," and "after."

Who was that person? He used to rush through dinner or cut the family vacation short to get back to the office. Now he thinks back to the family times as the most wonderful times of his life. He knows what is irreplaceable.

Who was that person? He used to worry about so many imaginary troubles, most of which never happened anyway. Now he spends most of his time in the present. He appreciates today's sunset, daisies, simple things, and good friends. He knows how precious each moment is.

Who was that person? He used to think about what he wanted to get out of life. Now he thinks about how grateful he is for the gifts he has had.

Who was that person? He used to measure his goals in terms of where he was going. Now he focuses more on what his life will have been about. He asks less and less why his child died, and more often: "Why did he live?"

Who was that person? He had never heard of The Compassionate Friends. Now they are his best friends. And he knows that by helping someone else through TCF, he also helps himself.

Who was that person? I don't think I know

When I look in the mirror I see a middle aged man. His hair is thinning on top and beginning to turn gray on the sides. Lines and creases are starting to form at the corner of his eyes. It seems that his age may be starting to show. When I look in the mirror at this man I see much more. I see a lonely man that is hurting and angry inside. He's trying to grieve over the loss of someone very dear and special to him. Someone taken away by death with no warning, his life taken by his own hand. It has left a big emptiness inside him.

He sometimes wears a mask to hide the tears from the pain and anguish that he feels. Sometimes he's afraid to let others know exactly how he feels, afraid of what they'll say to him, afraid of their reaction to him.

He just wishes things were different. He wishes it would all go away. He wishes he could wake up in the morning and realize it has all been a bad dream.

When he's out in public he hopes it doesn't show. He hopes the tears don't come to his eyes. He hopes his anger doesn't come out. So he tries as hard as he can to hold back the tears. After all a real man is not suppose to cry. So he hides behind his mask.

He manages to suppress his anger. He saves it for when he's alone then he finds ways to release it to keep from hurting others and to keep from lashing out at them for no reason. So if you see me out and about and you manage to see a tear in my eye, don't criticize me, judge me, or stereotype me. Real men do cry and sometimes it is difficult not to. Don't tell me things like "enough is enough", or that "it's time to get on with your life. "Don't tell me, "it's been long enough, that I should be over it." It just doesn't work that way. Life will never be the same again, and you never get over it.

Listen to me but don't condemn me. Don't feel sorry for me, feel with me. Don't shy away from me, but help me carry this load. Be there for me when I need someone to talk to. Tell me I don't need to hide behind my mask. Tell me it's ok to feel the way I feel. Tell me it's ok for me to

cry. Tell me it's ok to feel the anger. Most of all tell me you'll help me through this nightmare of life.

--Lloyd E. Carson

JASON

Jason's a little boy who walks with me that nobody sees,

Jason's the child that talks to me but nobody hears.

Jason's the boy who dries my tears when I cry,

And Jason helps me go on when I want to quit.

Jason is never seen or heard by others, But I see him and I hear him.

Jason was my little boy, you see.

He lives with God, but he also lives with me.

-- Tracy Helmick

(Tracy's 3-year-old son, Jason, was born 5/28/82 and died 10/28/85 after being hit by a vehicle.)



For Friends and Family...

Listen

If I am pained and come to you, Before you speak, consider twice.

"Shoulds" and platitudes won't do.

I want your ear, not your advice.

Just listen, friend, and try to hear Beyond my words ... (the stuff I hide).

The outward rage is Oh! so mere Compared to all the hurt inside.

If you would only say to me,

"That must have been so hard for you."

Instead of tossing off a line like,

"Here's the thing that I would do ...

Tune in to how I feel, my friend,

And hear beyond the words I say.

At times my words may not describe

Emotions deep, held down at bay.

These deeper feelings kept within

Are journeys words can't take you to.

But travel past the things you hear,

Don't say, "Don't let it bother you."

Please try to listen with your heart

Don't seize this chance to criticize,

Or preach to me, or even start

With trite cliches that sermonize.

If you've not walked my lonely road (I hope you never will, my friend),

Don't try to be my therapist

Or say it's time my grief should end.

Listen! Listen! Be a friend!

Command compassion to your ears

To sift the weight of words I say

And hear unspoken tears and fears.

Most times your silence suits me fine,

Or weep with me, that's soothing, too.

To heal this broken heart of mine,

Just LISTEN when I talk to you

--Fran Morgan Deer Park, NY

Reprinted from Bereavement Publishing, Inc.

4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917

Newly Bereaved ...

Compassion

I cry, when a tear rolls down your cheek

I agonize when you weep.

I know that you question, I know that you pray,

That you scream at night in your sleep.

I'm aware of your quavering voice when you speak,

Of your blank, straightforward stare,

I know of your pain, your depression, your guilt

That you search for "a face" everywhere.

I watch as you walk with your head bowed low

With despair written over your face.

I hear the quick sign, the internal cry

I know how, you wearily pace.

I see how you search, for a sign, for some hope

That the light will still shine in your life.

I know how you live, I know that you die

From the harsh words that wound like a knife.

I empathize most with your loneliness now

Even though you're not always alone.

I see the rapture as you speak your child's

name

For I've lost a son of my own.

-- Charmaine Stickel TCF Pittsburgh, PA

Welcome ...**You Said**

You said, "I can never live without him." I said, "You will find a way."
 You said, "This pain will break me." I said, "Allow it, it will lessen."
 You said "No one knows how I feel" I said, "You are very right."
 You said, "I will never heal." I said, "You will."
 You said, "Tell me how." I said, "I don't know your way, but I will come with you."
 You said, "Tell me when." I said I don't know, but I'll be there."
 You said, "Why did this happen?" I said, "Some questions have no answers."
 You said, "I want to die." I said, "I understand."
 You said, "I have to live." I said, "I know."
 -- Bereavement Magazine, 4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917

Helpful Hint...**The Shirt in the Clothes Hamper**

The shirt was at the bottom of the dirty clothes hamper when he died. I found it there when I got around to doing wash some time after the funeral. Life must go on in spite of what happens to us, and the wash is part of ordinary day-to-day life.

It was natural for it to be there - I'd done his wash since he was born twenty-one years before. I stood and looked at it and decided to leave it there.

Year after year, wash after wash, I left it there. I liked seeing it there. It was a symbol of normal life. My life wasn't normal anymore, and I left it there to sort of hang onto the past, I guess. It gave me comfort to see such an ordinary, normal thing as one of his shirts in the dirty clothes when my life was so extraordinary now.

One by one such "hangings on" are done away with as we slowly reenter life's mainstream. We know the time is right for these habits to go if we don't grieve for their going when it happens. And the leaving must happen, just as we also must move forward eventually.

One day in a fit of neatness, my daughter did the wash, and she washed *the shirt*. It must

have been five years after her brother died. I felt a tiny surprise when I saw the shirt hanging clean in the closet. But, I didn't feel sorrow or even disappointment. The time seemed to be right for it to leave the dirty clothes hamper. A simple thing, but it was a symbol of progress of sorts. I'm glad no one rushed me - I would have resented it. I was allowed this simple idiosyncrasy until it was natural to give it up.

Left alone, I probably never would have removed it - just left it there, never really knowing why. But when the shirt was removed ... when it happened, I know I was getting better. Finally I was letting go, and that was okay.

--Fay Harden TCF, Tuscaloosa, AL

Book Review ...

From Erin with Love, by Helen M. Fisher. Erin was diagnosed with Hodgkin Disease at the age of twenty while a junior in college. She wrote of her experiences and feelings during her battle. Her mother wrote this book to complete Erin's work, help others, and to say that death is not the end; it is a transition and that contact is possible between these dimensions.

--Book review by Cheryl Groth

Silk Roses for Susan

I took silk roses to your grave today.
 Valentine's Day is coming
 And you loved red roses
 I stayed there awhile and remembered
 Your last Valentine's Day.
 I kissed you and gave you candy
 With money stuck in the top.
 You tilted your head
 In that certain way you had
 And smiled, pleased at the gift.
 Sweet daughter, I miss you so.
 There was still much of life to share.
 Nineteen is way too young for dying.
 I would pick fresh roses for you every day
 If I could have you back.
 But I can't change the ending.
 So I took silk roses to your grave today,
 And cried fresh tears instead.

--Ginger Elwood TCF, Knoxville, TN

A Look At You

I was not prepared for it;
I thought I 'd put all your pictures
In predictable places
Where I wouldn't be knifed by them,
Unexpectedly,
Ripped apart by our separation.
So I was not prepared
When all of a sudden,
Your face appeared
In a photo I hadn't even known existed
And which had fallen, unseen,
Into an envelope
Of some ordinary-looking papers.
Extraordinary! Your little face-
Your funny face. And funny hair-
The happy gleam in your eyes
And the sand clinging to your wet legs ...
Of course! That day at the shore
The sound of it, the smell of it
The feel of you all comes back.
Every fiber of my mother's being
Leaps with the memory of every inch and fold,
And curve, and round, of your toddler's body.
And I long for you ... And the dam breaks.
The uncontrolled sobbing. Released.
All the wailing spent. Our life has gone on
As though - almost - you hadn't existed.
Yet the longing in my heart
Testifies that - I will say it-
You were my life.
And I don't know what to do - Without you.
With the pain of having known you
And lost you.
And with becoming impatient of
ever seeing you again.
I don't know how to do it-
How to live without you
But every day that I do it
- I guess I am learning.
--Beth Cokeley TCF, Mercer Area, NJ



But then one day I came upon a man
who'd also lost his son.
I found that things I ran from
he wouldn't even shun,
But rather, he would treasure.
When I said I wondered why,
He told me that he called them
"catching butterflies."
This view of his intrigued me;
I wanted to hear more.
I learned that he took all of them
and carefully would store.
All of the reminders
that I would push away,
he would tuck deep down inside his heart
each and every day.
Now a name of likeness
when catching me off guard
does not upset me as it did,
and I don't find it hard.
For now instead I see these times
as opportunities
To see my son awakened
in these fresh new memories.
--Dottie Williams TCF Pittsburgh, PA

"Listening can turn grief into growth. We do not take grief away from people; we simply help them walk through it – by talking it out. They need to talk to be a good listener. A good listener is a walking, touching personal intensive care unit."
--Comforting Those Who Grieve: A Guide for Helping Others by Dough Manning, from a chapter entitled "Listen"

Each day, as I push forward,
I move a step ahead and then back,
but still gaining,
if even but a little.
--Mary Rapke, TCF Grand Junction, CO



The South Bay/L.A. Chapter of
The Compassionate Friends would like to thank
the following families for their year-end donations
to help support our chapter:

It often hurt to come upon
reminders of my son,
'tho often since I lost him
I would search around for one
which always brought on sadness.
The tears that I would shed
were caused by names or faces,
all things that I would dread.

Gail Megaloudis Rongen in memory of Nicole
Megaloudis
Pauline Cleary Basil in memory of John Cleary
Norman & Karen Sakura in memory of Andrew
Sakura
Burton & Jania Pizer in memory of Jennifer Pizer



Our Children Remembered



Ron Acker
Born: 10/65 Died: 5/95
Mother: Ursula Spey-Acker
Father: Heinz H. Acker

Jonathan Adams
Born: 1/81 Died: 2/08
Parent: Siv & Eddie Adams

Ramon Alvarez
Born: 10/84 - Died: 2/07
Mother: Terrie Alvarez

Sumer Nicole Alvarez
Born: 5/85 Died: 7/005
Parents: Dave Alvarez & Sandy Murphy

Robert H. Apodaca
Born: 12/55 Died: 9/89
Mother: Margaret Hall
Father: Al Apodaca

Noah William Aragon
Born: 1/05 Died: 3/06
Parents: Rich & Michele Aragon

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: June 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Joshua Arevalo
Born: 7/93 Died: 8/11
Mother: Vilma Alfaro

Joseph David Artino
Born: 11/51 Died: 11/07
Mother: Nancy Graybill &
Step-father: Art Graybill

Jason M. Bakos
Born: 9/79 Died: 12/07
Father: James Bakos

Alexandra Renee Balesh
Born: 9/73 Died: 3/95
Parents: Ron & Stella Balesh

Kimberly Barcnas
Born: 2/88 Died: 10/06
Mother: Maria Guadalupe Ixta

Christopher Barnhart
Born: 11/77 Died: 4/07
Parents: Ron & Susan Mother
Sister: Stacy Pierce

Christopher Michael Barta
Born: 2/72 Died: 9/04
Mother: Mary Barta

Stephen Barrington Baxter
Born: 7/61 Died: 4/99
Parents: Cash & Betty Baxter

Vincent Beagle
Born: 11/82 Died: 5/10
Mother: Angela Beagle

Tristina Ann Beale
Born: 12/80 Died: 9/08
Mother: Kathy Beale

Frank Becker
Born: 11/61 Died: 8/07
Parents: Al & Louise Becker

Kimberly Belluomini
Born: 10/62 Died: 10/00
Parents: Joyce Anderson &
Ronald Assmann

Sammy Bloom
Born: 2/59 Died: 12/82
Parents: Lois & Sam Bloom

Kurt Boettcher
Born: 12/71 Died: 06/95
Mother: Carolyn Boettcher

Todd Boettcher
Born: 2/79 Died: 10/79
Mother: Carolyn Boettcher

Alan Bolton
Born: 11/63 Died: 3/06
Mother: Helen Eddens

Kevin Border
Born: 11/88 Died: 11/09
Mother: Kelly Border

Antoinette Botley
Born: 12/67 Died: 7/10
Mother: Fredia McGrew

Renee Bouchard
Born: 3/75 Died: 5/06
Mother: Susan Bouchard

Tamara Lynette Boyd
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/00
Parents: Gloria & Gayle Jones

Jazzelyn Braga
Born: 11/08 Died: 5/09
Father: Leonard Braga

Lawrence Tom Brennan
Born: 11/86 Died: 12/10
Parents: Manuel & Lisa Jo
Hernandez

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

Sayumi Claire Brower
Born: 9/08 Died: 9/08
Parents: Scott & Maiko Brower

Devon Leigh Brown
Born: 5/90 Died: 3/92
Mother: Heidi Brown

Eric Michael Brown
Born: 11/65 Died: 9/00
Mother: Beverly Young

Benjamin Matthew Bryan
Born: 10/84 Died: 6/96
Mother: Karen Merickel &
Robert Bryan

Robert L. Buckner
Born: 2/92 Died: 3/03
Parents: Brad & Cindy Buckner

Tony Burack
Born: 12/63 Died: 12/87
Parents: Rita & Herb Burack

Brittany Nicole Cail
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/08
Mother: Raquel Cail

Albert Caldera
Born: 3/78 Died: 2/10
Parents: Refugio & Maria
Caldera

Christina Califano
Born: 10/90 Died: 11/06
Father: John Califano

Cesar Isaac Cancino
Born: 01/05 Died: 01/05
Parents: Claudia & Cesar
Cancino

Kenneth Capparelli
Born: 1/77 Died: 1/04
Mother: Sandy Capparelli

Frank Christopher Castania
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie
Castania --Grandparents:
Richard & Ann Leach

Vanessa Roseann Castania
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie
Castania-- Grandparents:
Richard & Ann Leach

Ryan Cavanaugh
Born: 6/83 Died: 11/06
Mother: Kimberly Cavanaugh

Zackary Kenneth Charlton
Born: 11/81 Died: 3/10
Parents: Christine & Kerr
Sister: Allie Bentley

Nathaniel Choate
Born: 7/80 Died: 5/08
Mother: Vicki Blain

Andrew Alexander Chou
Born: 12/03 Died: 12/03
Parents: Lu-Sieng Siau &
Wibawa Chou

Ophelia Grace Clark
Born: 10/82 Died: 9/10
Sister: Rebecca Clark

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

Kelly Swan Cleary
Born: 3/59 Died: 3/95
Parents: Dick & Bev Swan

Sarah Elizabeth Cooper
Born: 10/95 Died: 8/00
Parents: Mark & Sandra Cooper

Tiffany Corkins
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/05
Mother: Nancy Lamb

Hugo Ignacio Corbalan
Born: 4/84 Died: 5/08
Mother: Isabel Acosta

Marika Critelli
Born: 3/78 Died: 11/09
Father: Michael Critelli



Our Children Remembered



Joseph Francesco Michael
Curreri
Born: 9/80 Died: 10/07
Mother: Karen Curreri

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

Rodney D. Day, Jr.
Born: 4/96 Died: 6/01
Parents: Jersuha Day

Danielle Ann Davis
Born: 10/78 Died: 3/10
Mother: Jackie Davis

Michael David Deboe
Born: 12/75 Died: 5/09
Parents: Dave & Judy Deboe

Phillip Dennis Delurgio
Born: 11/64 Died: 7/10
Mother: Denise Nolan Delurgio

Anthony Joseph Demasio
Born: 6/52 Died: 7/00
Vivian Demasio

Lee Denmon, III
Born: 7/79 Died: 3/03
Parents: Frances & Lee
Denmon, Jr.

Douglas Thhorn Dethlefsen
Born: 11/64 Died: 11/09
Father: Douglas G. Dethlefsen

Cori Daye Desmond
Born: 3/80 Died: 12/09
Parents: Mark & Monica
Desmond

Luke Edward Devlin
Born: 12/07 Died: 12/07
Parents: Jacqueline & Tom
Devlin

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

Gary A. Dicey, II
Born: 4/82 Died: 6/98
Father: Gary A. Dicey, Sr.

Michael A. DiMaggio
Born: 10/54 Died: 7/01
Parents: Neno & Helen Di
Maggio

Amy Elizabeth Dodd
Born: 1/74 Died: 7/02
Mother: Kathleen Dodd

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

Ramsay Downie, II
Born: 2/64 Died: 10/99
Ramsay & Sally Downie

Rachel Sheridan Dunlap
Born: 9/69 Died: 3/09
Mother: Janell Dunlap

Myaka Kaitana Durham
Born: 1/04/06 Died: 1/06
Parents: Jahman & Ampy
Durham

Scott Michael Dykstra
Born: 7/72 Died: 10/01
Parents: Mike & Rita Dykstra

Gary Edholm
Born: 5/56 Died: 9/95
Parents: Patti & Bob White

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

Timothy Charles Egnatoff
Born: 11/92 Died: 9/08
Parents: Rick & Cathy Reny

Lorian Tamara Elbert
Born: 5/66 Died: 10/07
Mother: Dorota Starr Elbert

Luke Emery
Born: 7/89 Died: 12/99
Parents: Karen & Glenn Emery

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

Henry Espinoza
Born: 12/63 Died: 9/98
Mother: Virginia Espinoza

Kurt Faerber
Born: 8/63 Died: 3/87
Mother: Trudy Faerber

Jarod Ryan Faulk
Born: 8/86 Died: 12/08
Father: Joe Faulk

Chase Feldkamp
Born: 5/05 Died: 3/06
Parents: Buddy & Jessica
Feldkamp

David Joseph Ferralez
Born: 2/74 Died: 12/02
Parents: John & Rebecca
Ferralez

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

Emma Nicole Fisher
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06
Parents: Nancy & Elliott Fisher

Casey Owen Flint
Born: 5/75 Died: 7/09
Mother: Catherine Flint

April Lou Flynn
Born: 4/61 Died: 1/05
Mother: Peggy Flynn

Mark Frazee
Born: 5/79 Died: 7/07
Mother: Kathy Cammarano

Peter Joseph Fuentes
Born: 2/68 Died: 3/98
Mother: Pat Fuentes

Donald A. Funk
Born: 12/41 Died: 9/00
Parents: William & Norma Jean
Funk

Ricardo Ramon Gallegos JR.
Born: 4/85 Died: 2/02
Mother: Sheri Schrier

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

Melinda "Peeper" Gardner-
Collins
Born: 6/56 Died: 8/07
Mother: Pat Gardner

Justin Brian Gartland
Born: 10/81 Died: 4/05
Parents: Brian & Paulette
Gartland

Richard Lamar Gibbs
Born: 3/84 Died: 5/05
Mother: Ann Wasecha

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

Jacob Seth Goar
Born: 1/79 Died: 5/01
Parents: Michael & Venus
Nunan

Morgan Leeann Gomez
Born: 1/08 Died: 1/08
Parents: Amanda & Louie
Gomez

Nicholas Gonzalez
Born: 2/63 Died: 10/01
Parents: Nick & Gloria
Gonzalez

Evan Leonard Grau
Born: 8/82 Died: 5/04
Parents: Maria & Wayne Grau

Christopher Dudley Gray
Born: 5/83 Died: 2/04
Parents: Dudley & Laurie Gray

Matthew Ryan Gregory
Born: 3/80 Died: 1/11
Parents: Carol & Fred Gregory

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

Anthony Joel Guzman
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/08
Mother: Teresa Guzman

Andrew John Gvist
Born: 7/88 Died: 5/05
Father: Mark Gvist



Justin Todd Gwizdala
Born: 10/75 Died: 6/96
Parents: Kathy & Gary
Gwizdala

James Burman Hahn
Born: 11/68 Died: 12/05
Mother: Berna Hahn &
J. Thomas Hahn

Grant Henry Hampton
Born: 3/79 Died: 7/05
Parents: Jeri & George Medak

Brandon Allen Hanson
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/10
Mother: Yolanda Alepe

Robert Belmares Harris
Born: 12/66 Died: 12/95
Parents: Bea & Larry Harris

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

Rachel Anne Hartman
Born: 2/91 Died: 7/04
Parents: David & Paula
Hartman

Robert Hashimoto Jr
Born: 5/66 Died: 5/92
Parents: Robert & Shirley
Hashimoto

Caleb Haskell
Born: 6/78 Died: 9/06
Parents: Karen & Kim Haskell

Daniel Hassley
Born: 2/71 Died: 2/90
Parents: Eila & Richard Hassley

Alicia M. Hayes
Born: 1/81 Died: 5/96
Parents: Becky & Dave Jordan

Jason Patrick Healey
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/09
Mother: Sharon Sykes Healey

Emma Joy Heath
Born: 5/98 Died: 6/07
Parents: DJ & Phil Heath

Kent Hisamune
Born: 6/00 Died: 6/00
Parents: Toshi & Hideko
Hisamune

Jesse Hoffman
Born: 1/86 Died: 8/10
Mother: Gina Hoffman

Hope Ann Honeycutt
Born: 12/62 Died: 6/00
Mother: Donna Honeycutt

Adria Horning
Born: 12/91 Died: 3/07
Parents: Gary Horning & Linda
Cipriani

Jeremy Michael Howard
Born: 7/83 Died: 6/94
Mother: Donna Howard-
Scruggs
Grandmother: Charlotte Crager

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

Miranda Howells
Born: 8/91 Died: 11/09
Father: Walter Howells III

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

Tara Hudson
Born: 1/86 Died: 1/07
Mother: Mari Hudson

Chad Michael Huisinga
Born: 10/74 Died: 12/95
Parents: Alan & Melinda
Huisinga

Hannah Nichea Hupke
Born: 9/87 Died: 6/05
Parents: Bruce & Joni Hupke

Zane Austin Hutchins
Born: 9/03 Died: 2/04
Parents: Mae Rivera & Jon
Hutchins

Casie Leean Hyde
Born: 3/89 Died: 12/05
Mother: Kelli Rigby-Hyde

John Joseph Iacono
Born: 5/02 Died: 5/04
Parents: Nancy & Anthony
Iacono

Ben Francisco Inez de la Cruz
Born: 1/71 Died: 11/91
Parents: Francesca Inez &
Emmanuel de la Cruz

John E. James
Born: 6/62 Died: 9/93
Parents: Marilyn & Lupe Arvizo

Kalaea Jennings
Born: 4/07 Died: 9/07
Parents: Nacio & Maria
Jennings

Melissa Gale Jetton
Born: 5/58 Died: 7/84
Parents: James & Cathie Jetton

William Jimenez
Born: 3/94 Died: 5/04
Sister: Adrianna Jimenz

Daniel A. Jones V.
Born: 5/92 Died: 10/09
Father: Daniel A. Jones IV.

David B. Jones
Born: 3/50 Died: 3/01
Mother: Lucille Jones

Thomas Sean Jordahl
Born: 7/67 Died: 4/03
Mother: Lynda Orr

Jeff Joyce
Born: 2/68 Died: 4/01
Mother: Wadene Duffy

Lance John Juracka
Born: 10/69 Died: 4/06
Parents: Frank & Nancy Juracka

Heather Mary Kain
Born: 6/83 Died: 2/10
Mother: Maura Kain

Edwin J. Kaslowski
Born: 11/67 Died: 7/96
Mother: Carolyn Kaslowski

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

Scott Ira Kaufman
Born: 4/68 Died: 7/95
Mother: Renee Kaufman

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

Kalin Marie Keech
Born: 10/90 Died: 6/09
Richard & Kris Keech

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

Timothy Michael Kerrigan
Born: 4/68 Died: 8/02
Mother: JoAnna Kerrigan

Sean A. King
Born: 7/63 Died: 12/07
Parents: Catherine & Michael
King

Kay Dee Kinney-Palser
Born: 6/87 Died: 6/99
Grandmothers: Diana Palser &
Kay Kinney

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

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

Susan Ann Kruger
Born: 9/64 Died: 6/08
Mother: Gloria Swensson

Kyle Kubachka
Born: 1/89 Died: 11/08
Parents: Keith & April
Kubachka

Natalie Samantha Large
Born: 6/05 Died: 6/05
Parents: Burke & Maya Large

Dolores LaRue
Born: 8/57 Died: 11/08
Mother: Maggie Ramirez

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

Bernard Lawrence
Born: 2/63 Died: 12/06
Mother: Jackie Bowers



Our Children Remembered



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

Janet Sue Mann
Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10
Mother: Nancy Mann

Angel Flores Misa, Jr
Born: 10/69 Died: 7/06
Parents: Roland & Luscita Dilley

Geoff James Nowak
Born: 11/97 Died: 2/98
Parents: Christen Murphey & Geoff Nowak

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

Gabriella Mantini
Born: 5/85 Died: 8/06
Mother: Martha Mantini

Jamie Susan Mintz
Born: 11/52 Died: 12/04
Sister: Jessica Mintz

Logan Kay Nunez
Born: 1/95 Died: 4/05
Parents: Mike & Laura Nunez

Avery James Lent
Born: 12/03 Died: 7/06
Parents: Crystal Henning & Dan Holly

Alex J. Mantyla
Born: 3/89 Died: 8/08
Parents: Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla

David F. Mobilio
Born: 7/71 Died: 11/02
Parents: Richard & Laurie Mobilio

Michaela Grace Nunez
Born: 2/05 Died: 7/05
Parents: Roger & Jennifer Nunez

Wendy Levine
Born: 10/65 Died: 11/95
Parents: Paul & Sharon Levine

Audrey Sinclare Marshall
Born: 2/00 Died: 3/00
Parents: Don & Kimberly Marshall

Danielle Ann Mosher
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97
Parents: Paul & Rose Mary Mosher

Sally Anne O'Connor
Born: 12/62 Died: 2/11
Mother: Grace "Darline" Dye

Michael Lococo
Born: 2/55 Died: 1/10
Mother: Patrina Lococo

Paul Martinez
Born: 1/86 Died: 3/08
Mother: Lorraine Martinez

Peter Anthony Murillo
Born: 11/72 Died: 10/04
Mother: Stella Murillo

Thomas Jinkwang Oh
Born: 2/72 Died: 6/03
Sister: Barbara Oh

Anthony "Tony" Low
Born: 1/46 Died: 3/99
Parents: Frances & Matthew Low

Daniel George Mateik III
Born: 12/84 Died: 6/09
Mother: Stefanie Hudak

Christopher Myers
Born: 10/86 Died: 5/06
Parents: Janet & Larry Myers

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

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

Daniel McClernan
Born: 7/53 Died: 2/07
Mother: Lee McClernan

Edward W. Myricks
Born: 4/72 Died: 10/11
Parents: Edward & Sandra Myricks

Henry Ortega
Born: 5/97 Died: 7/08
Parents: Henry & Wendy Ortega

Janet Sue Mann
Born: 10/61 Died: 9/10
Mother: Nancy Mann

Robert Andrew Mead
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11
Mother: Carol Mead

Annamay Rebecca Celine Naef
Born: 4/95 Died: 10/11
Parents: Heinz & Ursina Naef

Caitlin Nalani Oto
Born: 10/88 Died: 2/05
Father: Carl Oto

Audrey Sinclare Marshall
Born: 2/00 Died: 3/00
Parents: Kimberly & Don Marshall

Nicole Marie Megaloudis
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-Rongen

Christian Paul Nagy
Born: 5/02 Died: 5/02
Parents: Paul & Teresa Nagy

Sally O' Toole
Born: 10/53 Died: 03/85
Mother: Kay Arndt

Kyle Jeffrey Martin
Born: 11/80 Died: 7/04
Parents: David & Joanne Martin

Alexis Melgoza
Born: 3/90 Died: 6/11
Mother: Gina Melgoza

Richard Paul Negrete
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04
Mother: Sally Negrete

Lucas Hunter Palar
Born: 11/89 Died: 5/06
Parents: Hugh Palar & DeAnna Williams

Jason Lee Martineau
Born: 9/79 Died: 12/07
Father: James Bakos

Shawn Mellen
Born: 05/81 Died: 8/99
Godmother: Rose Sarukian

Joy Ellen Nelson
Born: 1/97 Died: 1/97
Parents: Mary Desmond & David Nelson

Armon Parker
Born: 4/72 Died: 3/04
Mother: Sabrina Parker

Michelle Marie Mandich
Born: 5/89 Died: 2/05
Parents: Michael & Lori Mandich

Damion Mendoza
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92
Parents: Carlene & Paul Mendoza

Eric M. Neuan
Born: 1/79 Died: 3/09
Parents: Eric & Lynn Neuman

Annemarie Pellerito
Born: 9/73 Died: 8/03
Parents: Vicki & Pete Pellerito

Daniel Edward Manella
Born: 9/67 Died: 10/98
Sister: Kathleen Manella

Shannon R. Middleton
Born: 2/77 Died: 5/94
Mother: Candy Middleton

Danielle Nice
Born: 7/81 Died: 8/04
Parents: Daniel & Debbie Nice

Joseph Ryan Persh
Born: 1/03 Died: 2/03
Parents: Gary & Jane Persh

Elizabeth Mann
Born: 7/60 Died: 5/05
Parents: David & Olivia Mann

Steven Douglas Millar
Born: 2/70 Died: 10/00
Parents: David & Suzanne Millar

Monique Nicholson
Born: 7/71 Died: 1/08
Sister: April Nicholson

Daniel Andrew Peterson
Born: 1/78 Died: 5/85
Mother: Gay Kennedy



Our Children Remembered



Richard Phillips
Born: 9/81 Died: 3/11
Mother: Lisa Grant

Jennifer Pizer
Born: 10/69 Died: 4/91
Parents: Janis & Bud Pizer

Chris Pierce
Born: 11/77 Died: 4/07
Sister: Stacy Pierce

D'Juan Marcel Pratt
Born: 12/79 Died: 11/06
Mother: Gwendolyn Elaine
Maiden

Shannon Quigly
Born: 112/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen Shortridge

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

Julius Ramarez JR.
Born: 8/10 Died: 8/10
Parents: Bridle & Jules Ramirez

Tejal Pati Reddy
Born: 6/86 Died: 12/08
Parents: Pranitha & Krupa
Reddy

Richard R. Reyes
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/08
Mother: Terry Reyes

Aaron Rico
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10
Parents: Cameron & Annette
Rico

Keith Patrick Riley
Born: 3/69 Died: 10/99
Parents: Kevin & Debby Riley

Christopher Rivera
Born: 10/67 Died: 1/06
Mother: Katherine Wagner

Ruth "Vanny" Rodriguez
Born: 10/73 Died: 5/01
Parents: George & Ruby
Rodriguez

Christine E. Rojas
Born: 6/64 Died: 12/94
Parents: Ray & Esther Rojas

Jamie (James) Lloyd Roman
Born: 4/78 Died: 2/97
Mother: Carolyn Roman

Frankie Romero
Born: 10/81 Died: 9/93
Mother: Magdalena Hilda Salas
& Francisco L. Romero

Dominic Roque
Born: 8/02 Died: 1/09
Parents: Kerrie & Ren Roque

James Garrett Ross
Born: 12/74 Died: 10/05
Parents: Jim & Sharon Ross

Michael William Roth
Born: 6/71 Died: 12/08
Parents: Karen & William Roth

John Patrick Rouse
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02
Mother: Sharon Rouse

Michael B. Ruggera, Jr.
Born: 4/51 Died: 4/96
Parents: Michael & Frances
Ruggera

Shannon Quigley Runningbear
Born: 12/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen Crowley
Shortridge

Armando Sainz
Born: 6/76 Died: 2/02
Mother: Jennie Hernandez

Andrew Patrick Sakura
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08
Parents: Bruce & Karen Sakura

Jeffrey Alan Sampson
Born: 3/86 Died: 5/05
Parents: Claude & Paula
Sampson

Lisa Sandoval
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92
Parents: Susan & Ruben
Sandoval

F. Marlow Santos
Born: 10/84 Died: 7/93
Parents: Fred & Julie Gillette

Shaulamit Rose Scher-Gilfert
Born: 12/08 Died: 12/08
Mother: Aliza Scher
Grandmother: Adrienne Scher

Karen Ailegra Scholl
Born: 8/64 Died: 4/99
Mother: Kay Scholl

Matt Scholl
Born: 2/73 Died: 4/08
Parents: Bill & Kay Scholl

Candace Arond Schonberg
Born: 3/98 Died: 11/00
Parents: Andrene & Arond
Schonberg

Jonathan "Jamie" Schubert
Born: 7/65 Died: 12/06
Parents: Lynn & Roy Schubert

Melissa Lauren Schweisberger
Born: 10/84 Died: 11/99
Parents: John & Margarita
Schweisberger

Dylan Elwood Sievers
Born: 8/08 Died: 8/08
Parents: Daren & Marne Sievers

Tyson Donald Sievers
Born: 8/08 Died: 9/08
Parents: Darren & Marne
Sievers

Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94
Parents: Bob & Gwen Slater

Jeff Eric Snowden
Born: 2/61 Died: 6/01
Parents: Daryle & Sandra
Snowden

Larry A. Stauffer
Born: 1/67 Died: 5/08
Mother: Shirley Finnin

Miaamor Jennine Steeh
Born: 7/05 Died: 9/10
Father: Donya Steen

Daniel John Swiggum
Born: 6/88 Died: 7/08
Parents: Stewart & Marian
Swiggum

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

Joseph Tauaefa
Born: 2/85 Died: 7/10
Parents: Loi & Sioka Tauaefa

Kristi Nicole Taylor
Born: 5/80 Died: 9/94
Parents: Kathy & Cory Taylor

John Teresinski
Born: 12/67 Died: 1/00
Parents: Beverly & Victor
Teresinski

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

Laura C. Toomey
Born: 1/69 Died: 12/78
Mother: Michael & Elizabeth
Toomey

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

Nathan Torbert
Born: 1/78 Died: 12/05
Mother: Rebecca Williams

David Torres
Born: 6/66 Died: 3/06
Mother: Joyce Whirry

Marcelo Torres
Born: 8/81 Died: 9/03
Parents: Jaime & Carmen
Torres

Brian Gregory Trotter
Born: 10/78 Died: 8/94
Mother: Abby Trotter-Herft

Ubong Jabari Uko
Born: 2/81 Died: 5/09
Mother: Denise Dues

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

Gregory Earl Veal
Born: 2/90 Died: 7/00
Mother: Virginia Veal

**Our Children**

Tommy Villanueva
Born: 10/68 Died: 5/02
Parents: Jennie & Edgar Villanueva

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

Mark Daniel Vinson
Born: 11/78 Died: 7/10
Mother: Virginia Vinson

Serena Yasmeen C. Viveros
Born: 11/05 Died: 11/05
Mother: Brenda Viveros

Chris Henry Vogeler
Born: 9/66 Died: 12/04
Parents: Frank & Lois Fisher

Marisa Ann Vuoso
Born: 7/83 Died: 3/93
Parents: Debbie & Marco Vuoso

Kristopher Wadman
Born: 11/82 Died: 10/00
Parents: Michael & Melodie Wadman

Carl Alan Wagenknecht
Born: 7/70 Died: 8/04
Parents: Tom & Janis Wagenknecht

Jeffrey Sinclair Wagstaff
Born: 9/80 Died: 4/99
Parents: Johnny & Barbara Walker
Sister: Sheimekia Wagstaff

Cory Dylan Walker
Born: 8/76 Died: 3/01
Parents: Jim and Susan Walker

Eric Webb
Born: 6/85 Died: 10/07
Parents: Jim & Vickie Webb

Dennis William Webber
Born: 5/85 Died: 3/05
Parent: Blaine & Sin Young Webber

Sharon Ann Wendt
Born: 6/54 Died: 4/99
Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Carmel Doucet

Brian Scott West
Born: 8/70 Died: 4/08
Parents: David & Connie Schlottman

Andreas Wickstrom
Born: 12/83 Died: 12/01
Parents: John & Inge Wickstrom

Victoria Winchester
Born: 2/57 Died: 2/84
Mother: Erin Adams

Jennifer Winkelspecht
Born: 7/75 Died: 8/95
Parents: Brian & Lisa Winkelspecht

Jordan Michael Witte
Born: 1/87 Died: 11/08
Parents: Licha & Mike Witte

Bob Woodyard
Born: 7/55 Died: 10/08
Bill & Barb Woodyard

Amy Woolington
Born: 10/85 Died: 1/07
Parents: Pam Weiss & John Woolington

Christopher Wootton
Born: 11/86 Died: 5/08
Father: Jim Wootton
Cristofur Daye Wroten-Kennedy
Born: 2/75 Died: 9/01
Mother: Dusty Wroten
Father: Joe Kennedy

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

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

Remembered

Thomas Zachary
Born: 12/85 Died: 7/11
Father: Bob McGaha

Kevin Zelik
Born: 11/85 Died: 6/10
Parents: Joe & Linda Zelik

Birthday Tributes...

In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that help offset chapter expenses.)

Sorry, no birthday tributes were submitted this month.

For Siblings ...**Brother-Sister Bond Showed Itself on Valentine's Day**

A couple of years after my son Michael died, I was sorting through some things which I had saved from our children's school years. I came across a Valentine card which depicts a little girl surrounded by heart symbols. "Stuck on you Valentine!" the card reads. On the back of the card is seven-year-old Michael's hand-written signature. The card was to his big sister Kelly.

The emotional bond between Kelly and Michael was formed very early. Almost three years older, Kelly was excited about the prospect of welcoming her new brother into the world. When I was pregnant with Michael, we didn't know the baby's gender in advance. "It's not a girl," Kelly had insisted. "He's my brother, and his name is Michael!"

The relationship between our two children was not unlike that of many other healthy siblings. Kelly and Michael were daily companions and playmates during the early years. They had their bouts of sibling rivalry, too, which on some days would drive me insane! Their love for each other was solid, however. On one particular evening, after a day of almost non-stop arguing between the two of them, while they were lying in their beds I heard, "Night Mike, I love you!" "Night Kelly, I love you!"

At age 19, Michael died in an automobile accident while Kelly was away at college. Kelly has had to

learn how to be an only child. She has had to define for herself a new identity, a difficult task as a young adult. I am confident that the bond which was formed between them will remain forever.

Kelly is married and shares her new home with her husband and an adorable Pug named Otto. They occasionally spend a weekend at our house and sleep in Kelly's old bedroom, where Michael's "Stuck on you Valentine!" card can still be found on the night stand as a symbol of a bond that will never die.

By Anne Dionne – TCF Online Community Services

For Grandparents...



When You Lose A Grandchild

When you lose a grandchild, the grandparent is twice bereaved. Once for the grandchild in whom you can no longer take delight, be proud of and love, whose future you will never be able to watch unfold; the second, is for your grown children, the parents, who cannot imagine a future at all without their child, but who are attempting to go on in excruciating pain and whom you are powerless to console.

One loss leaves a constant and gnawing void in your life. The other brings a constant challenge to your heart—which aches for all of them.

--Lorell Thompson, Phoenix, AZ
Grandmom to David Samson (1982-1998)

From Our Members...



To My Brother Neil

They say that time heals all pain. Well, I'm still waiting. The pain that I feel inside my heart and soul is so heavy. At times it feels so hard to breathe. Not a moment or a day goes by that I don't think of you. I miss you so much. I love you more than life itself. It hurts so bad sometimes that I just sit and cry. How can I go on without you? Because you are the missing piece of my heart and without you I just don't know where to start. It hurts more knowing

you're so far away, and I'm so sad and gray.

With love from your sister, Loretta

We welcome and encourage you to submit contributions you found meaningful to you in your grief. We prefer your original poems and thoughts, but we can also print other material if proper credit is given to the author. Please take the time to submit a poem or article you found helpful.

TCF 2012 National and International

Conference...The Compassionate Friends/USA, is pleased to announce that, in conjunction with the 35th National Conference, it will also be hosting The Compassionate Friends 5th International Gathering. The combined conference will be held July 20-22, 2012 in beautiful Costa Mesa, California.

Because many people will be traveling long distances from countries around the world, special excursions are being planned for before and after the conference, so everyone is invited to combine their stay with visits to some of California's great attractions.

You can now make reservations for the conference hotel. Although The Compassionate Friends has arranged a room block for the conference that includes every room within the Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa hotel, we recommend that you reserve your room early if you wish to stay at the host hotel. Because our national conference includes the International Gathering, there is little doubt that all rooms will be filled. Room charge is \$129 per night plus tax of approximately 11%. The room block is available July 17-24. You can also receive the special room rate July 14-16 and July 25-27, but subject to more limited availability. Rooms are King Size (holds 2, roll-away bed available for \$10 per night) or double queen (maximum 4 per room).

To reserve your room online, please go to Online Reservations at

www.CompassionateFriends.org.

Please note that the first night's deposit is required at the time you reserve your room. Should your plans change, this deposit will be refunded as long as the room is cancelled at least one day prior to the start of your reservation. You can also call your reservation directly to the hotel at 714-540-7000. Room block reservations will be taken until June 26th or until the room block is sold out, whichever comes first. If the room block sells out, as we anticipate, we will advise you regarding overflow hotels.



We Need Your Help... The 2012 Conference Planning Committee has started planning for next year's conference. Our chapter is in charge of the Volunteer desk, and the Hospitality and Reflection Rooms.

Because it will be held so close to home, we strongly recommend that you start making plans now to attend. Registration and hotel reservations can now be made for the conference. Right now, we are looking for people to sign up to volunteer at the conference. There are many jobs, both big and small that need to be done. Could you sit at a table and answer questions? Restock refreshments in the Hospitality Room? Help put together a video of children's pictures? Can we count on you to help?

We would love to include as many members of our chapter as we can to help the conference be a huge success. This is a rewarding undertaking that we can do to honor our children and to help the newly bereaved... Please help us make this one of the best conferences TCF has ever had. Please call Kitty Edler at (310) 541-8221 or E-mail her at KittyEdler@aol.com for more information.

TCF Now on Facebook ... Please visit and help promote The Compassionate Friends National Organization's new Facebook page by becoming a fan. You can get there by clicking on the link from TCF's national website home page at www.compassionatefriends.org. Or, you can log into Facebook and search for The Compassionate Friends/USA. In addition to the social support aspect, The Compassionate Friends/USA Facebook page will have information about upcoming events such as conferences, the Walk to Remember, and the Worldwide Candle Lighting. Please visit often and contribute to the conversation.

Our Website... We are now posting a tribute page for each of our children. Please visit the new site and add your child's information. You can also download the monthly newsletter which will help defray chapter expenses of the printing and mailing of your newsletter. (Please let us know if you can be removed from the regular mailing list.) Contact Crystal at: crystal@tcfsla.org and she will help you with the steps to create your own tribute.

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.

Healing the Grieving Heart... Featuring experts who discuss the many aspects of grief, with a main focus on the death of a child and its effects on the family. "Healing the Grieving Heart" can be heard on the Web live at www.health.voiceamerica.com every Thursday at noon EST and are also archived on the TCF national website. Shows are also broadcast at 11 a.m. EST Sundays on a number of radio stations across the country and streamed online simultaneously at www.HealthRadioNetwork.com

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, and 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.

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, your donations keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help.



Birthday 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.)

Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month preceding your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: Feb.1 for March birthdays). Otherwise they will appear if space permits or in the following month's issue.



Phone Friends ... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child with 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.
 Cheryl Stephens..... (323) 855-2630
 Kitty Edler..... (310) 541-8221
 Karen Merickel..... (310) 375-2498
 Richard Leach (grandchild)..... (310) 833-5213

SIBLING PHONE FRIENDS

Kristy Mueller..... (310) 373-9977
 Joey Vines..... (310) 658-4339
 Sue Gardner..... (310) 316-3777

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book. Each child is given a page in the book. 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. 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 the librarian know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.



Newsletter... For those of you who are receiving the newsletter for the first time, it is because someone has told us that you might find it helpful. We warmly invite you to attend one of our meetings. Please let us know if you know of someone who could benefit from our newsletter which is sent free to bereaved parents. We do ask that professionals, friends, and family members contribute a donation to help offset the costs involved. If any information needs to be changed, or if you would like your child included in the "Our Children Remembered" section, please contact the editor at (310) 530-3214.

Additional Grief Support Bereavement Organizations and Resources:

TCF National Newsletter: For all bereaved parents and siblings. Published quarterly; subscription fee. Contact TCF Inc., P.O. Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 (630) 990-0010

TRINITY CARE HOSPICE: Bereavement Coordinator Gayle Kirma (310) 257-3567

FAMILY & FRIENDS OF MURDER VICTIMS: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

ALIVE ALONE: For parents who have lost their

only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr., Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available. www.Alivealone.org

SURVIVORS AFTER SUICIDE: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Sam & Lois Bloom (310) 377-8857

BEREAVEMENT MAGAZINE: Articles for all types of grief. Bereavement Publishing, Inc., 4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917
OUR HOUSE/BEREAVEMENT HOUSE: 1950 Sawtelle Blvd., Suite 255, L.A., CA General bereavement and bereavement for children. (310) 475-0299

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. Susan K. Beeney, P.O. Box 8057, Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

THE GATHERING PLACE: Various support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens, (also Spanish). Call Claire Towle (310) 374-6323, Beach Cities Health Dist

THE LAZARUS CIRCLE: Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7;15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

LOCAL TCF CHAPTERS

Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.

Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.

Orange Co./Anaheim: (714) 993-6708

Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206

Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.

Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160

Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.

Verdugo Hills: (818) 957-0254 4th Thurs.

San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Post Net Printing for their help in printing our newsletters each month and to Reverend Karl Johnson and the Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

STEERING COMMITTEE OFFICERS:

CHAPTER LEADER: Cheryl Stephens

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOF READER: Becky Jordan

TREASURER: Ken Konopasek

CARDS & WEBSITE: Crystal Henning

NEW MEMBER FOLLOW-UP: Cheryl Stephens



DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

In loving memory of Brandon Armstrong and Dominique Oliver ... not a day goes by where I don't think of you or miss you. You two are the guiding force that makes me want to live, not just exist...
Love, Mom

In loving memory of Tommy Villanueva, 10/68 - 5/02. We miss you. You are always in our thoughts and forever in our heart.
Love, Mom and Dad

In loving memory of Kevin Zelik, 11/85 - 6/10. Kevin, we'll particularly miss you this Christmas season. You're always in our thoughts and prayers. We know you're around us because we often feel you love for us.
We love you, Mom, Dad & Jeanine

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 _____ Sent from _____

Tribute _____

To include your donation in the next newsletter, we must receive it by the first of the month, or it will appear in the following issue.

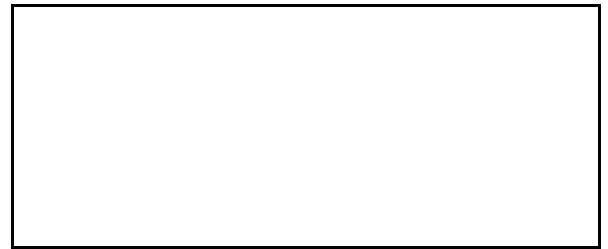
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P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171

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Through
All the tears
And the sadness
And the Pain
Comes the one thought
That can Make me internally
Smile again:
I have Loved...

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FEBRUARY 2012

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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