



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



South Bay/L.A. Chapter



A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND FAMILIES

JAN. 2012 ISSUE

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OUR NEXT MEETING

will be Jan. 4th, the first Wednesday
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

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

LOCATION:

The Neighborhood Church
415 Paseo Del Mar
Palos Verdes Estates, CA
(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. → 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.

COMING IN JANUARY...

This month's topic will start with Coping with your child's death in the New Year.

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

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January 4th meeting ... This meeting we will be focusing on the new year and what we can do to help ourselves cope with our grief. We managed to get through the holidays, and the new year may seem to stretch on forever without any foreseeable hope in the future. The idea of making a New Year's Resolution may seem too hard, or too trite, but I encourage you to explore the ideas in the following article.

Sometimes we make things harder for ourselves in our grief. We need to remind ourselves how far we have come and take stock of the progress we have made in our bereavement. Sometimes we feel that we are not making any progress in our grief, that the pain will go on forever. This is when it is so important to take a moment to reflect on all the small steps we have accomplished in our grief. What helps we will keep on doing, and what didn't help we will throw out and try something else to see if it works better. Grief is hard work, but let me reassure you that it does get easier and easier.



New Year's Resolutions for Bereaved Parents

I Resolve:

That I will grieve as much and for as long as I feel like grieving, and that I will not let others put a time table on my grief.

That I will grieve in whatever way I feel like grieving, and I will ignore those who try to tell me what I should or should not be feeling and how I should or should not be behaving.

That I will cry whenever and wherever I feel like crying, and that I will not hold back my tears just because someone else feels I should be "brave", or "getting better", or "healing by now".

That I will talk about my child as often as I want to, and that I will not let others turn me off just because they can't deal with their own feelings.

That I will not expect family and friends to know how I feel, understanding that one who has not lost a child cannot possibly know how I feel.

That I will not blame myself for my child's death, and I will constantly remind myself that I did the best job of parenting I could possibly have done. But when feelings of guilt are overwhelming, I will remind myself that this is a normal part of the grief process, and it will pass.

That I will not be afraid or ashamed to seek professional help if I feel it is necessary.

That I will commune with my child at least once a day in whatever way feels comfortable and natural to me, and that I won't feel compelled to explain this communion to others or to justify or even discuss it with them.

That I will try to eat, sleep, and exercise every day in order to give my body strength it will need to help me cope with my grief. To know that I am not losing my mind, and I will remind myself that loss of memory, feelings of disorientation, lack of energy, and a sense of vulnerability are all normal parts of the grief process.

To know that I will heal, even though it will take a long time.

To let myself heal and not feel guilty about feeling better.

To remind myself that the grief process is circuitous - that is, I will not make steady upward progress. And when I find myself slipping back into the old moods of despair and depression, I will tell myself that "slipping backward" is also a normal part of the grief process and these moods, too, will pass.

To try to be happy about something for some part of every day, knowing that at first, I may have to force myself to think cheerful thoughts so eventually they can become a habit.

That I will reach out at times and try to help someone else, knowing that helping others will help me to get over my depression.

That even though my child is dead, I will opt for life, knowing that is what my child would want me to do.

--from the Brooksville/Spring Hill, FL newsletter

Happy New Year???

How can it ever be again? How will I ever make it through another year of this torment? When we are hurting and so terribly depressed, it is hard to see any good in our new year, but we must try. First, we must hold on tightly to the idea that we will not always be this miserable, that we will some day feel good again. This is almost impossible to believe, but even if we don't believe it, we must tell ourselves over and over again that it is true - because it is! Many parents whose children have died some years in the past will attest to this. Remember also, no one can suffer indefinitely as you are suffering right now.

Second, we must face the new year with the knowledge that this year offers us a choice - whether we will be on our way to healing this time next year, or still be in the pit of intense grief. We must remind ourselves that if we choose to be on our way to healing by the following year, we must work to get there. That work entails allowing ourselves to go through our grief - to cry, to be angry, to talk about our guilt - to do whatever is necessary to move toward healing.

Third, we must look for good in our lives and find reasons to go on, and accept the fact that our continued suffering will not bring our child back. Some of us have other children and a spouse for whom we must go on. More importantly, we have our own lives that must be lived. Most of us know that our dead children would want us to go on!

No, this coming year may not be a happy one, but it can be a constructive one. Through grief, we can grow and become more understanding, loving, compassionate. and more aware of the real values in life. Let us not waste this new year!

--Margaret Gerner TCF, St. Louis, MO

Am I Making Progress?

January is a reflective month. Ice ponds reflect the leaden sky, and the heart reflects the emptiness of a frozen spirit. When will we begin to thaw? When will we feel like we're making some progress in this place of icicles and cold sheets, sunless days and long, empty nights? Will we ever be happy again? Will I ever be

ME again?

January is also the month for making promises, commitments and resolutions (resolutions are FANCY promises). We begin our new year with high hopes, strong wills and long lists of things that will be different this year. To celebrate my commitment to a New Me, I bought a jogging suit, expensive shoes, and a digital watch, complete with timer, pulse meter and M & M dispenser. (You've got to have some motivation!) THIS YEAR WILL, BE DIFFERENT.

We also spend some time looking back over the road we've traveled, and sometimes we wonder if we have made any progress at all. In the beginning, we misplaced car keys, checkbooks, toothbrushes, relatives and important stuff like the TV Guide. We had to begin making lists of everything. We simply couldn't remember anything. I couldn't remember my address, social security number, zip code or my mother-in-law's birthday. (I never could remember that.) I even started making lists of my lists! I knew I was going to be all right when I first discovered I could remember that I had made a list.

You know you're making progress when you can coordinate an entire outfit again. Shoes, belts, ties, purses, even sweaters and jackets often got left, simply because when we were hurting so terribly, we couldn't think about what to wear. Many of us didn't even know the panty hose were on backwards, or the tie was crooked. If you are wearing matched shoes right now, then you are making progress.

You're making progress when you no longer choke when you say your loved one's name. When you can walk down the cereal aisle in the supermarket and not dissolve into tears, progress is being made. When you can enjoy baking HIS favorite cookies or pie or cake again, you are on your way.

When the photographs come back out once more and you can wander through the scrapbooks again, letting the smiles peek through the tears, then hope is returning. When memories, for the most part, bring comfort and warmth instead of emptiness and pain, January grows shorter. When you begin to understand that putting away your loved one's things does NOT mean putting him out of your life, then your step becomes lighter.



Progress occurs when you completely understand that your loved one DIED, but the love you share between you can never be destroyed. Hope begins to return when you can hear laughter again - and some of that laughter is your own.

Recovery is possible once unrealistic hopes for a lost future are given up, grieved for, and moved beyond. Perhaps it is not so much saying good-bye to our loved one as it is saying farewell to the old us and the life we shared. Making progress through grief doesn't mean that you no longer miss your loved one. He is a part of your life forever, but his role in your life changes. Our lifestyle and habits change to reflect a different family landscape.

Now, as you look back, it is amazing to see the life fabric - no longer ripped apart with a gaping hole, but mended with tiny stitches, left perhaps a bit lumpy (like lots of us), but patched with time, effort and love. Old threads and new threads have blended together and have been re-woven into a pattern not quite the same as we had originally planned. It is a tapestry of love, given and received, remembered and shared. Life can become good and whole and complete once again; not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no longer within hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive. The renewed energy and love we feel as winter turns into spring becomes the memorial to our loved one not the grave markers we decorate, not the books we write, not the speeches we give, but the LOVE we share and pass on.

You know you are making progress when all of this begins to make some sense (save this column to read later!). When the shoes match and the car keys are found and the list of lists grows shorter, then you are making progress. Then the laughter can return, and with that magical sound comes the healing of the hurt and the shedding of the band-aid, because the heart is learning to sing again.

January the month to check on our progress, to make new commitments - and to start jogging.

Hope springs eternal!

--Darcie Sims, Bereavement Magazine, January 1990 4765 Carefree Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80917



Days of Our Lives

Before my son died, life was filled with event after another. The days came and went, one month evolved into another, and the "special" days on the calendar added a new and joyful dimension to our otherwise routine lives. Philip's sudden death changed every part of my life, including the way I now look at the days, the months, the seasons, and those special occasions that previously were times of great anticipation. Now my calendar is not always my friend; rather, it is a guide through my life as a bereaved parent. This is how my calendar now looks:

JANUARY- A new year begins, and I am here to see it enter. My son does not have the opportunity to grow, to learn, and to develop as I do. When the new year dawns, I feel guilt because of all I have and all that he is missing.

FEBRUARY- How I miss the Valentine made by tiny hands and lots of glue, and the "I love you, Mommy" prompted by his dad. Do children still make silhouettes of Lincoln and Washington to tape on the refrigerator on President's Day?

MARCH- In the south, the trees are beginning to bud and daffodils are bobbing in the gentle breeze. I remember when he picked every one in the yard and offered them to me in his chubby hand. Then he blew his nose into them, trying to sniff their fragrance. Daffodils now make me sad.

APRIL- Easter and spring symbolize new life. Oh, how I wish his life was here with me. There are no new Easter clothes to buy for him and no eggs to gather in his basket. His chair is conspicuously empty at Easter lunch.

MAY- As soon as the Easter displays are taken down, Mother's Day displays go up in the stores. I can wear a red rose that day because I rejoice that my own mom is still living, but how can I show the world that my heart is broken because I am a mother who has lost a child?

JUNE- The last day of school arrives and I wonder what he would want to do with his summer. Vacation provides a nice relief, but the homecoming is so painful that I wonder if it is worth the trip. My heart breaks for my husband because he lives through Father's Day without his precious son.

JULY- The fireworks are beautiful in the sky and I wonder if Philip can see them. I miss him at the parades and cook-outs I didn't get to teach

him about our nation's birth.

AUGUST- It is now time to buy new school clothes, new crayons, and a back-pack. The mall seems crowded with blonde, blue-eyed boys.

SEPTEMBER- The new school year begins and I see children all around me in various stages of anxiety, getting ready to meet new teachers and new friends. I see boys and girls parade down the street to and from school, but my son is not among them.

OCTOBER- Halloween- what would he want to "be" this year? He Man? A ghost? Thundercat? When the small children knock at my door for treats, a lump forms in my throat.

NOVEMBER- Sitting around a bountiful table with all of the relatives seems to make his absence even more pronounced than before. For three years after Philip's death, I was thankful that I had him for even a little while. This is still my hardest time.

DECEMBER- Christmas and Hanukkah are family-centered occasions that cater to our children. What should we do with his stocking this year? What would Santa be bringing him if he were alive? Will I be able to sing the carols this year? His special ornament is on the tree and the memories of his two Christmases are bittersweet.

With a calendar so loaded with special time and special events, no wonder we bereaved parents are constantly on a roller coaster. It is understandable that at every meeting of The Compassionate Friends, parents can be heard saying, "It has been a hard month". When you add to these months the day of our child's birth, the date of his/her death, and birthdays of other family members, the days of our lives seem overwhelming.

It has been four years since Philip died, and I can honestly say that the days, months, and special occasions do get easier to bear. I do believe, however, that it is unrealistic to think that they will ever be the same.

--Elaine Grier, Philip's Mom

Grief is UNIQUE

People in families can grieve quite differently. Maybe a mother needs to cry a lot, but a father needs to work out. Sometimes a younger sister may keep playing as if she doesn't know a

person died. An older brother may want to spend all his time with his friends, but perhaps a middle brother may want to stay around his house and family. Even twins can really be opposite in their feelings: one twin might be so mad that he wants to fight and fight, while the other one might try to do everything perfectly to make his family feel better. Maybe Dad wants Dave to be just like his brothers. Dave isn't interested.

George usually feels like talking on Sunday, but nobody else in his house seems ready to talk. Someone in the family wants to have lots of pictures of the baby around, but another person doesn't want to see them. Grandma can't bear to hear Daddy's name, but the kids love to hear stories about him. Sue, who is twelve, feels better when she can visit the grave, but her other sisters never want to go. John wishes they could do fun stuff again but his Mom doesn't want to do anything. Maybe there are differences in your family, too.

It is hard when people feel differently about the same thing. It would be lots easier if everyone felt exactly the same at the same time, but people are unique in their feelings in their grief. If your family has different needs and wants, you'll have to figure out some compromises that will be OK for everyone. Try making a list of things that you like to do and things you don't want to do. If everyone makes a list of things and reads it to each other, you can work out if there are any changes you can make to try to help each other. At least it will help you understand why the people in your family act or say the things they do. It's not easy, but this is a time when lots of patience is needed. Be easy on yourself and on each other.

-Barb Coe, TCF, Greater Ozarks, Norman OK

A Solitary Journey



Grief is a solitary journey.

No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died.

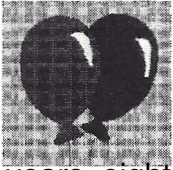
And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song.

It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way.

Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey.

And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

--Helen Steiner Rice



A Permanent Fixture, Like the Pain in Your Chest...

Who knows why it took me three years, eight months, and 12 days to remove the remains of a balloon from the mantle and picture frame? "Grief has its own schedule."

It was such a small thing. A foolish thing. The remains of an old navy blue balloon with white polka dots on it.

For anyone who wants to know what happens to an inflated balloon after three-plus years: it shrinks, even so gradually. The air that was forced into it leaks out, bit by bit. Within a few weeks, it begins to resemble a "before" picture for a facelift ad. After several months have passed, it's beyond restoration. Not even a Hollywood lift-and-tuck wizard could rejuvenate this shriveled prune. And if the prune happens to be attached to several long silk ribbons, the overall effect is even more wretched. So wretched, in fact that you think about getting rid of it, but can't. It's not the right time yet.

Next, the rubber begins to disintegrate, although it's not clear exactly when this happens. (A person who dusted the living room mantle with greater frequency could be more precise.) If the rubber happens to be in contact with something, say a picture frame, it adheres. Permanently. From a distance, it might be an artistic paint spatter. Up close, it looks like the cat dined on something interesting and then had second thoughts. As for the part that isn't pasted in the picture frame - it ends up stuck to the mantle, a small lump of withered rubber.

Her aunt saw her blow up the balloon. I wish I had. She sat, so her aunt told me, on the kitchen floor with her legs splayed out in front of her, a little sweaty and flushed from her bike ride home, blowing it up and then attaching it to a bottle of wine with long silk ribbons.

It was the middle of August. In my mind, she sits on the kitchen floor, her long hair falling across her face as she gets the ribbons just right, demonstrating her gift for making everyday objects look beautiful.

She must have been wearing one of her hideous pairs of baggy, khaki shorts. A white T-shirt, probably, with a slightly quirky environmental message. Boots, sandals. An assortment of silver rings. I saw her a few minutes later when she gave the bottle of wine

to her father and me for our anniversary, but I can't really remember what she was wearing.

The bottle of wine sits in a little cupboard, gathering dust. She died in an accident three days after she gave it to us. We have never been able to think of a reason to open it. The balloon, well, it ended up draped over a framed picture on the mantle.

And there it stayed for three years, eight months, and 12 days.

During sporadic cleaning gestures toward the mantle, I would touch it; mark its progress toward demise. Somehow, that which she had held in her hands became sacred. Her breath remaining in this little sac of rubber. Maybe a year after she died, an acquaintance wondered if I knew about the strange substance pasted on the picture frame and mantle. Yes, I knew. Her friends, noticing the clutter of boxes, clothing, old stuffed animals, papers and books still in her bedroom gently suggested that I might like some help, disposing of these things. No. I wouldn't. Another year passed, and another.

The navy-blue-and-white blob was a permanent fixture. A bit like the pain in your throat and chest, just there, part of our lives. It no longer looked like a balloon, but we knew what it was.

And then, one day, I picked up the picture frame and examined it closely. An exploratory scratch with one of my fingernails - no, old rubber doesn't come off. I inspected the lump on the mantle. Yes, it could be removed, although a small stain would always mark the spot.

It took another week, and then it was time. In a flurry of activity the picture was removed, the frame thrown out, a new one purchased and the mantle cleaned. It didn't feel right or wrong. Just sort of matter-of-fact. The idea of saving a scrap of the decayed rubber flitted through my mind and was met with "and what are you planning to do with it?"

I have no idea why it took three years, eight months, and 12 days for the right moment. I don't know why her green knapsack still sits on the floor of her bedroom packed with the same items as the day the police returned it to us. And I don't need to know why. That's just the way it is. Maybe the knapsack will always sit there. Or perhaps another right moment will come, and I will recognize it.

Grief experts like to talk about process and

stages - a movement toward some resolution. In other words, you're supposed to be going someplace. Interesting theory, but irrelevant when you're on the inside looking out. All you can manage is to live from moment to moment, to endure, and, most of all, to trust your instincts. There's no road map that tells you where you're supposed to be going, or how long the journey might take. You have to discover the path for yourself. If it takes a lifetime, so be it.

The rubber blob is gone, and we don't miss it. But the little girl, and then young woman, with the long, honey-colored hair, still inhabits our house and our memories. Jumping off the dock at the cottage, her tiny body encased in a life jacket, plus two ski belts for insurance. Turning cartwheels across the living room. Throwing open the front door so hard it bounces off the radiator, and shouting, "I have just had the worst day of my life!" Studying at the dining-room table, a cup of herbal tea and her cat beside her for comfort. Sitting on the kitchen floor, attaching a navy-blue-and white balloon to a bottle of wine with long silk ribbons.

--Sylvia Pegis Santin Toronto, ON, Canada

The Conspiracy of Silence

Does anyone know what to say to us,
When our loved ones die?
Losing them to suicide
Now that's the crowning blow!
There seem to be no words to help,
No pat or easy answers.
Instead, there is either silence,
or talk of anything else.
I guess we need to say it first,
To talk about our loss;
And connect ourselves
back to a world of loving,
but imperfect people.
-Carol Bredberg



How Do You Describe a Mother's Love?

How do you describe a mother's love.
It's anxiously awaiting the birth of your baby,
feeling it kick and move inside you.
It's a love so fresh and new.

How do you describe a mother's love?

It's letting him nurse until he falls asleep, then kissing his eyelids and tiny lips before putting him to bed.

How do you describe a mother's love?
It's being patient when the crying won't stop, and feeling as if the tears were your own.

How do you describe a mother's love?
It's watching him sleep at night,
marveling at the miracle you took part in creating
- wondering how you ever lived without him.

How do you describe a mother's love?
It's knowing you'll do anything for him
that you have a bond, not just now, but for
always.

And nothing, not even death itself, can separate a child from a mother's love.

--Kami (Hamilton) Clark, TCF/McMinnville, OR

Newly Bereaved ...

A Whole New Beginning

After what we've been through, it's only natural to be bitter and angry AT FIRST. What you choose to feel after you've begun to recover is up to you. Do you want to see the world as an evil and ugly place where innocent children die every day? You can. Or do you want to see the world as a place where children are born and nurtured every day? They are. Do you want to see people as luckier than you because all of their children are alive? Or do you want to feel grateful that others who are in your shoes founded and run TCF? Do you want to picture your child as lying in a box underground, or as running in beautiful meadows- free from the pains and worries that accompany life?

You can, to a point, choose how to feel. You can dwell on the dark side of life and feel angry, sad, scared, and lonely for the rest of your life. Or you can choose to find things to be grateful for, even through the pain. You can find the things to be happy about, despite the death of your child. I don't expect you to ever be glad that your child died, but can you be glad that his/her pain is over? Can you be glad that you have other children, or a spouse, or that the sun came up today?

You just survived those holidays that you were dreading so much. Use that knowledge to tell yourself that you are stronger than you thought. Decide to count your blessings, instead of your losses. It doesn't mean that you left your child behind. It is a tribute to your child that you can reach out to people in a whole new way because of the sensitivity that you've gotten from this. Would your child want you to hide under the covers and let life pass you by? I don't think so.

I know how much it hurts to lose a child. It's been almost six years for me, and it still hurts often. I also know that I've discovered a whole new me who is stronger than I ever thought that I was. I know that helping others helps me. I know that I was put on this planet for a more important reason than to acquire the shiniest car or the biggest house.

Let's make this brand new year a whole new beginning. Let's see the good in the world and make sure that we are part of that good.

--Kathy Hahn TCF Lower Bucks, PA

Friends and Family ...



It's The Thought That Counts

Often in times of trouble
we don't know what to say
so we choose to say nothing,
and sometimes run away.
When friends are really hurting,
we don't know what to do,
so we offer weak excuses
or say we're hurting, too.
It really doesn't matter
what kind of gift we bring;
we only need to be there
even if we don't bring a thing ..
It truly is amazing
what a hug can do,
when heartache numbs the senses,
and friends depend on you.
There's comfort just in knowing
that you are not alone,
when tears are overflowing,
and hearts are cold as stone.
It's the loving prayers of others
that balance our accounts,
for when we measure love,
it's still the thought that counts.

--Clay Harrison BPUSA, Bridgeport, WV

Welcome...



We're Alike, You and I

We're alike, you and I. We've never met. Our faces would be those of strangers if we met. We would barely perceive the others presence if we passed on our walk through the mists. We're unknown to each other until the terrible words have been spoken:
"MY CHILD DIED."

We're alike, you and I. We measure time in seconds and eternities. We try to go forward to yesterday. Tomorrows are for whole people, and we are incomplete now. The tears after a time turn inward to become invisible to all, save you and me. Our souls are unanswerable prayers:
"GIVE ME BACK MY CHILD."

We're alike, you and I. The tears that run down your face are my tears, and the wound in your souls is my pain, too. We need time, but time is our enemy for it carries us farther and farther from our lost child. And we cry out:
"HELP ME."

We're alike, you and I. And we need each other. Don't turn away, but give me your hand and for a time we can cease to be strangers and become what we truly are, a family closer than blood, united by a bond that was forced upon us -
- but a bond that can make us stronger, still wounded to be sure, but stronger for our sorrows are shared.

-- Judy Dickey TCF, Greenwood, IN
Editor's Note: Each of our meetings is different. Sometimes someone will ask the questions that you are struggling with, and their advice is invaluable. Other times you may choose to share with us how you handled a particular aspect of grief. We are not professionals, but fellow bereaved parents. The opinion of each member is how they are feeling at the time. Our emotions run amuck while grieving. There is no "cure" for the pain we experience with our grief. Yet, we are here to support each other as we come to terms with our losses. We ask you to join us and to try and attend three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you.

Kindness
is a hard thing to give away-
It usually comes back!

Helpful Hint...**Parents (Celebrate)!**

Did you know every time you speak your child's name or someone speaks to you about them you are celebrating their life?

Our kids were loaned to us for such a short time. Don't hide the fact they were here. If you feel people shut you out because you mention your child's name, remember the time they were here and what they accomplished in their lifetime. Speak your peace, don't be afraid because a friend or relative does not have the courage or courtesy to hear you.

Every time you write a poem or a letter for your child you are celebrating that life. They whom have died left a mark on this Earth. They have touched so many lives. Sometimes we never hear about these things.

I know in my heart every child who died has some legacy he or she left behind. Look at us, the parents who are grieving, have felt that impact.

Please share your stories. These kids have a lot of stories to share even though they have passed over. Make a small effort while you are here to celebrate their lives. Help another child, smile, give someone hurting a hug or just make an effort for yourself. Take a walk, go to church, get a new hairdo. Our children are not forgotten. We keep them alive by talking about them. They have left us many memories.

Help us remember and to know them by sharing their lives!

--Marie Welsh TCF, Sugarloaf, PA

Book in Review ...

THE WORST LOSS, by Barbara D. Rosof. How families heal from the death of a child can depend on many things. The age of the child, how the child died, and the family structure affect the healing process. This book is a "must read" for down-to-earth practical advice to guide families through healing after the death of a child.
-Review by Cheryl Groth

Unbroken Link

There are moments in my grieving
where deep in my heart
the love I have for my son
and the love he has for me come together.
And in those moments there is an
understanding that turns my sadness into joy
knowing that we will be together again.
For love is eternal
the true reality which cannot be extinguished
-Andrew McLean, Father of David Nelson McLean

To Honor You

To honor you, I get up every day and take a
breath and start another day without you in it.
To honor you, I laugh and love with those who
knew your smile and the way your eyes twinkled
with mischief and secret knowledge.
To honor you, I listen to music you would have
liked, and sing at the top of my lungs, with the
windows rolled down.
To honor you, I take chances, say what I feel,
hold nothing back, risk making a fool of myself,
dance every dance.
You were my light, my heart, my gift of love
from the very highest source.
So every day, I vow to make a difference,
share a smile, live, laugh and love.
Now I live for us both,
so all I do, I do to honor you.
--Connie F. Kiefer Byrd, in loving memory of
Jordan Alexander Kiefer

**The South Bay/L,A, chapter of The
Compassionate Friends thanks the following
people for their Year End Donations:**

Michael & Rita Dykstra in memory of Scott
Michael Dykstra

Yvonne Oneal in memory of Randall James
Prudhonne Sr.



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 Brytan
Born: 10/84 Died: 6/96
Mother: Karen Merickel &
Robert Brytan

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

Ophelra 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jeffery Mark Engleman
Born: 6/61 Died: 2/10
Parents: Janette & Laszlo
Engelman

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

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

Richard Paul Engelman
Born: 02/66 Died: 03/95
Parents: Janette & Laszlo
Engelman



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

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



OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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: 11/2/68 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 Ramirez 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. Szuccs
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



Our Children

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

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

Remembered



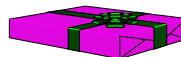
Cristofur Daye Wroten-Kennedy
Born: 2/75 Died: 9/01
Mother: Dusty Wroten
Father: Joe Kennedy

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

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...

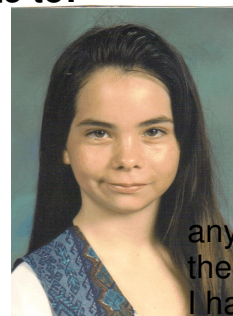
In honor of your child's birthday, we welcome you to submit a birthday tribute. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a birthday present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday donations that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

A Birthday Tribute to:

Alicia Hayes
1/81 - 5/96

Dear Leashie Bean (AKA Alicia),

This birthday marks that you've been gone longer than you were with us here on Earth. You died so young at 15. I remember worrying about this year, specifically, early after we lost you. Many odd thoughts go through your mind when you're overwhelmed with grief, initially. Not many make



sense. I wanted to thank you for changing my life, in a positive way. I didn't know what an advocate was, but it appears I like being one. Life is a journey. We never know what path may be set before us. I've learned to embrace the reality of life and find ways to cope and ways to give back. We are *definitely not glad* that you died; however, we have found a new appreciation for life. I love seeing little children at the market with their mommies as they are tickled in the checkout line, as I used to do with you and Monique. It makes me smile and remember your sweet beautiful little face. I try to find happiness in the simple things nowadays.

The friends we've made through The Compassionate Friends have enriched our lives so very much. I lost my best friend, Cindy, when we lost you. It's odd. She didn't want to come around anymore. On the bright side, I have a new best friend now. Her name is Eileen, and you may have already met her son, Adam. We both believe in heaven and that we will see our loved ones again. Hopefully you both will greet us with open arms, big broad smiles

and laughter. Still love You so much, and
 you sis Mooey is doing very well.
 Love Mom, Dad and Monique

From Our Members...



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.

Emma

Sometimes I feel you pounding on my heart to let you in. I can almost hear you say, stop crying, stop being sad, you can't feel me with all these emotions. So I try real hard to stop crying and being sad and sometimes, just sometimes, I feel a warmth on my heart, like a little hand or a little kiss, and I know it is you, saying I love you, and I miss you too

--Nancy Fisher, South Bay/L.A., CA chapter

For Grandparents...

I dread no more the first white in my hair. Or even age itself, the easy shoe, the cane, the wrinkled hands, the special chair. Time, doing this to me, may alter too, my sorrow into something I can bear.

--Edna St. Vincent Millay

For Siblings ...



My First Five Years as an Only Child

I've been without my brother for five years. I guess the hard part is over now. Sometimes I think I have aged 30 years in the past five. In a strange way, these past five years have been the best and worst years of my life. I have accomplished the many things of a typical young adult learning to drive, graduating from high school, going to college, and starting a career.

Every one of my accomplishments has been clouded by the fact that my brother George is not here to share each milestone, and is not achieving any more milestones for himself. He was cheated of so many things. He will never graduate, get married, have children or travel. He will never grow old, and I will never have a

brother to grow old with. I'll never have nieces and nephews.

The sibling relationship, usually the longest relationship of one's life, has been cut short for us. In these five years, although I have learned to accept that he is not coming back, the difficult part is dealing with it day by day.

My relationship with George ended just when we started to become friends. The childish fights and other annoyances of having a big brother were changing to real conversations and to having an occasional ally.

I am angry about all the things that we have missed and all the things that will never be, and I guess I always will be. Five years heals a lot of wounds, but the hurt will always be there, no matter how many years pass. In these past five years, I have been forced to grow up too fast. I have been forced into a new outlook on life. I have felt lonely and alone. I now realize that I will never be the same person as before. Maybe I am a better person because of what I have been through. Five years ago I never thought I would survive, but I am still here dealing with it every day. I don't know what the next five years will bring, but at least I have made it this far.

--Kristin Steiner. TCF. Staten Island,

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. We will let you know when registrations can 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@tcfsbla.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: Jan.1 for Feb. 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 whenever 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

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 Rachel Suzanne Hoyt, 2/70 - 1/95. Thank you for the gifts of life and love that you gave to so many. I love you and miss you.
Always your devoted sister, Laura

In loving memory of John E. James, 6/62 - 9/93. Love, love, love. It never dies.
Love, Mom & Lupe

In loving memory of Chad Michael Husinga, 10/74 - 12/95. It has been sixteen years now; we love you and miss you every day. You will live in our hearts forever.
Love from Mom, Dad and Kristin

In loving memory of Alicia Hayes. Happy Birthday. Never forgotten and never far from our hearts and smiles.
Love, Mom, Dad and Mo

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.

Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510-1171

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For The New Year

Where there is pain,
let there be softening
Where there is bitterness,
let there be acceptance
Where there is silence,
let there be communication,
Where there is loneliness,
let there be friendships.
Where there is despair,
let there be hope. -Ruth Eiseman

–Change of Service Requested–

JANUARY 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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