



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March 2016

Volume XVII No. 3



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is a self-help, nonprofit organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, support to every family experiencing the death of a son or daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. The butterfly signifies a new life for our lost children and a different life for ourselves. It is a symbol of hope, rebirth, and regeneration and beauty.

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MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month.

Our next meeting will be **March 3, 2016.**

TIME: **7:00 P.M.**

MEETING: **Fellowship Christian Church**
PLACE **26889 Bouquet Canyon Rd., Ste. C, Saugus, CA 91350**

(Take the side street next to the Goodwill store and make a left behind the store, church is located in that building, entry to the church is the double glass doors)



FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISTENER, PLEASE CALL:

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-252-4654

Alice Renolds (Co-Leader & Editor) 661-252-4374

Terry Kelling (Remembrance Secretary) 661-245-3081

Carol Costin (Treasurer) 661-670-0395

Solace



In the smallest hour of your day,
when you are alone
with things remembered,
questions unanswered
and unfinished dreams,
then:

give to yourself
the gifts of your kindness,
bring to yourself
the comforts of forgiveness,
share with yourself
the mercy of your love.

~Sascha
From: *For You From Sascha*

*The passage of time alone does not
cause our grief to end,
but its softening touch
helps us to survive.*

~Wayne Loder





The Anticipation of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road. That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing.

And then . . . IT happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Wells' time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

~Pat Loder

TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI

In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

Reprinted from We Need Not Walk Alone,

National magazine of The Compassionate Friends



Easter

The Easter and Passover seasons are upon us. They are special family times that make it more obvious that our child is missing. Some parents are struggling with WHAT they believe anymore.

The pretty new dressers and hats don't seem to matter as much as they once did. There are more important things on our minds now. We are facing the renewal of life all around us—and yet our missing child's life is not renewable. We hurt because life is going on and our child's is not.

These are normal reactions for some, when grief is fresh, for the changing of seasons is a poignant time for many. Those of us who have had the necessary time, wish to convey to those who have not, that it won't always be this painful. When your grief softens; and it will; so will many of the hurtful responses.

Get out in the sunshine—go for a walk—smell the fragrance of the flowers; and allow the warmth and beauty of the season to penetrate your being. It just may make your day a little lighter.

~Mary Cleckley

TCF, Atlanta, Georgia

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

March 3 - "Journaling/Letter to My Child"

April 7 - "Physical Effects of Grief"

Welcome New Members



Attending your first meeting takes courage and it is always hard to say "welcome" because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you eligible for our membership in TCF. However, we are glad you found us! We cannot take away your pain but we can offer our friendship and support. Do try and to attend at least 3 meetings so you have a chance to meet others who are bereaved and discover that special acceptance that occurs with new friends who truly understand.

New to our chapter are:

Carlos & Ana, Parents of Eric

Mark
in
Your
Calendar

April 7- Guest Speaker

Lix Mario, will be our guest speaker at our TCF meeting on April 7. He is a Life Coach, CHT and a sculptor.

Our topic for that night is "Physical Effects of Grief". Lix has made it his life quest to understand himself, the world around him, and therapy to evoke a beautiful mixture of spirituality and holistic education. With his knowledge, he will be giving us tips to handle the stress of grief. More background info on Lix in next month's newsletter.



Support

Come and lean on me a bit,
I know just how you feel.
I've felt your fear and loneliness,
I know your pain is real.

For I have been where you are now,
Walking that long, dark road.
Then someone came to comfort me
And share my heavy load.

They helped me find new courage
And hope when I had none,
They let me lean on them awhile,
'Til my battle has been won.

So come and lean on me a bit,
'Til your ordeal is through.
Then find someone who needs your help,
And let them lean on you.

~Martha J. Morrison
TCF Valparaiso, IN



Birthday Table

Your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthdays are given special recognition at our monthly meetings. During their birthday month, you are invited to bring photos and memorabilia to share and display on our Birthday Table. If you would like to bring a favorite snack or treat (even birthday cake or cupcakes) to celebrate, just let Diane or Alice know ahead of time!



Thank you to those who donate anonymously to our donation basket at our monthly meetings. Your donations and generosity are greatly appreciated and truly don't go unnoticed!



Reflections On March

In March, it is as if the higher powers know we need to be shaken out of the lethargy of winter, awakened, prepared for growth.

Winter is again almost behind us although the hardwoods very stubbornly hold onto the last leaves of autumn. Is there a power of nature that knows that the trees, the plants, and we humans are still within our lethargy, fixed in modes of inactivity, semi-dormant, and like all sleepers, resentful of rough disturbance?

Is there a knowledge that remembers the need for all things to bend, lest they break? "March comes in like a lion" and "leaves like a lamb." Perhaps we have a primordial need for the shake the month gives us each spring, and the ensuing lamb is only a resting lion, all work done for this period of renewal.

Suddenly the peaceful quiet of winter days is much disturbed by violent wind gusting! Stark limbs are pushed to strive and snap back against a still gray sky. The hangers-on, the last dead leaves, are torn from their resting places, as if the stark trees are told there must be room for new growth! Neighbors complain as the wind moves all trash, seemingly deposits it where it knows it will be cleared. March is not a gentle month, but perhaps it is the most playful of all months, a very young month! March is as playful as an adolescent child, a big friendly puppy, an awkward kitten.

What message does an ancient tree receive when its limbs are flung against the sky, repeatedly exercised, threatened with severe harm, and small wounds cause the flow of healing juices? What happens to the roots in their winter sleep when shaken by the wind-flung tree? March roars in like a lion, but no great harm results. March rages like an upset mother, but we know she loves us. March is playful. March rests, and storms again in case we again sleep. March cleans the trees, moves the dead leaves, rearranges all trash, and knows we will complain and clean it all again. It takes will, caring and health to complain. March laughs, and all of us who forgot how to laugh are reminded. Laughter is healthy. Playful is cheerful. Confusion awakens us. Storm threats alert us.

Every year March rages, rests, upsets, moves, surprises and repeats its lively repertoire; adolescent, out of sequence, full of surprise.. Bare trees flail against the sky. The waters of the lakes are roiled. New plants are rudely pushed about. Old ones are roughly awakened by the boisterous side of nature. March is the exuberant one of all the months. March ensures that, ready or not, we will greet the renewal of nature, new growth, new

challenge. We are simply not allowed to hide in our comfortable "rut." March is the month that refuses to be ignored. We are thrown out of the comfort of the winter shell. March's message seems to be "Ready or not," it's time to be alive again.

We, Compassionate Friends all seem to go through a period of dormant life and growth as we struggle to assimilate our great losses. With the passage of time, there is then a period of renewal, of interest in life, and an ability to accept new growth, new tasks, and life's challenges, 'awareness that we can leave some of our cold winter behind us.

Even in deep grief we, too, seem to come out of our lethargy and be cheered by the renewal so apparent in spring. We hope that you, this year, will enjoy the gusting winds of March and be stirred and cheered by March's playful prelude to the coming spring.

*~Dayton Robinson
TCF, Tuscaloosa, Alabama*



March

March is a season of "renewal". Let your darkened souls feel the warmth of new life as each tree, each bud breaks through the once frozen earth of winter. Let the "renewal" begin in your life. Your frozen heart can begin to live and feel again. Open it up to the warmth of your family and your friends and feel the love and yes, life that you thought died with your child.

*~Nancy Cassell
TCF Mommouth, NJ*

*Find a little time for Spring even if your days
are troubled.
Let a little sunshine in,
Let your memories be doubled.
Take a little time to see all the things your
child was seeing,
And your tears will help your heart
Find a better time for being.*

~Sascha Wagner



Were Received From:

Fran McPhie

In Loving Memory of her Son:

Sean Christopher McPhie

8/2 - 3/9



Kirk Jay & Dianne Mueller

In Loving Memory of a beloved wife,
mother, sister & our dear daughter:

Melissa Jane (Mueller) Matters

3/26 - 11/3



"In loving memory of Melissa Matters. Her honest, beautiful writing captured the joy and wonder with which she watched her children grow and discover their world, the fears and insecurities all parents face as we ever-so-gradually let go, and, and most of all, the hope and faith that filled every moment of her life with her precious, loving family."

Melissa wrote over 130 articles for ***Wading Through Motherhood***, a blog about the Joys and Trials of Motherhood.

Dear Melissa,

We miss you every day, though your love and our love for you go on forever.

Always,
Mom & Dad



Love Gifts



A Love Gift is a wonderful way to remember your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday or angel dates or just to say I love you. What better way than to have their photo included in our newsletter along with a special memory, thought or message, article or poem from you.

If anyone would like to make a donation in memory of their child, grandchild, or sibling you may give it to Alice or Diane at our meeting or mail it to Alice at 27949 Park Meadow Dr., Canyon Country, 91387. You can also email the info to TCF.SCV@gmail.com Love gifts should be received by the 15th of the month to be placed in the following month's newsletter. What a special way to share and remember your loved one!

Our chapter exists solely on voluntary, tax deductible donations. We thank you in advance for any donations you may be able to give or send. Your donations help to pay the expenses of our newsletter, purchase books & brochures, coffee & refreshments, new member's packets, our rental space and other miscellaneous supplies. They also fund our annual Balloon Release and Candle Lighting programs. We sincerely appreciate your support!

*When a parent remembers with all
their heart,
The child will forever remain.*

*~Larry Warren
TCF, N, GA*



"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Siblings Remembered

March 2016



<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
<i>Timothy Lee Renolds</i>	3/17	2/17	<i>Son of Tom & Alice Renolds Brother of Scott</i>
<i>Michael Rodriquez</i>	3/7	9/19	<i>Son of Beatrice Rodriguez Brother of Debbie DiCorrado</i>
<i>Tricia Seymour</i>	3/26	5/29	<i>Daughter of Christine Pagliassotti Sister of Craig, Deanna, Brian</i>
<i>Jeanene Sykes</i>	3/2	2/5	<i>Daughter of Ted Sykes</i>
<i>Sean Christopher McPhie</i>	8/2	3/9	<i>Son of Steve & Fran McPhie Brother of Brandon</i>
<i>Danielle Amy Binning</i>	10/20	3/9	<i>Daughter of Jilayne Binning</i>
<i>Lisa Michelle Hylla</i>	3/28	5/3	<i>Daughter of Maria & David Hylla Sister of Jennifer</i>
<i>Anthony Michael Tumasone</i>	12/15	3/18	<i>Son on Tony & Brenda Brother of Gina, Chris</i>
<i>Brianna Millard Smith</i>	10/6	3/30	<i>Daughter of David & Laurie Millard Sister of Jessica, Rosalie</i>
<i>Melissa Jane Matters</i>	3/26	11/3	<i>Daughter of Kirk & Dianne Mueller Sister of Jessica</i>
<i>Jonathan Michael Marinelli</i>	5/19	3/8	<i>Son of Carrie Cruse Brother of Matthew</i>
<i>Colleen Linette Brown</i>	3/17	11/3	<i>Daughter of Keith & Lin Brown</i>
<i>Bailey Lyn Haney</i>	3/28	7/11	<i>Granddaughter of Myra Kulick Brother of Jackson</i>
<i>Robert White</i>	3/1	8/26	<i>Son of Mary White</i>
<i>Colby Lee Dawson</i>	11/11	3/25	<i>Son of Dan & Sandy Dawson Brother of Drew</i>

If, in remembering our children, there are any errors or omissions, we are truly sorry! Please let us know of any corrections or additions as soon as possible so they may be incorporated into the database.