



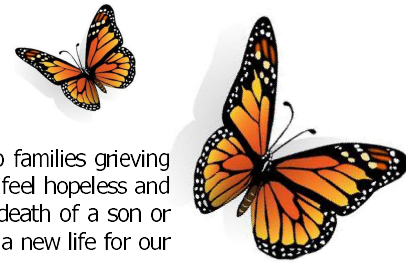
The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

December 2017

Volume XVIII No. 12



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.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA](http://www.facebook.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA)
website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

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

Our next meeting will be **December 7, 2017**

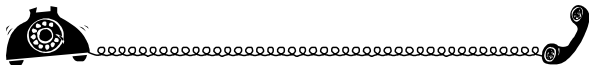
PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL TIME - BECAUSE OF HOLIDAY POTLUCK

TIME: **6:30 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, the 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) 661-252-4374
Carol Costin (Treasurer) 661-670-0395
Linda Stout (Remembrance Secretary) 661-202-8638



Gifts We Can Give Anytime

HUGS...To someone who is lonely

LOVE... To someone who has nothing to give in return

PATIENCE...To someone who is struggling with life

FREEDOM...To someone who needs to find his own destiny

GUIDANCE...To someone who is drifting in the sea of anxiety

UNDERSTANDING... To someone who is confused

TOLERANCE... To someone who doesn't see things as you do

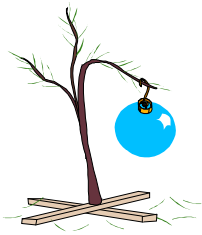
KINDNESS... To someone in pain

FORGIVENESS... To someone you feel has harmed you

SOFTNESS... To someone who has not removed his hard shell

TCF, Fox Valley





Why Christmas Is The Hardest Holiday?

Why Christmas Is The Hardest Holiday? Is it because of all those traditions that mean so much but now lie broken and empty in my heart? Is it especially hard now...because every time I try to roll out the cookie dough, tears drop into little salt pools on the counter?

Is Christmas so hard now because of all the tinsel and tissue? Because of all the crowds dashing madly into and out of stores...buying something wonderful for someone wonderful? Is Christmas so hard now because I don't need to shop or bake or decorate any more? Is Christmas so hard because I don't have someone wonderful any more?

It's been a long time since I endured my first bereaved holiday season, but even now, my heart sometimes still echoes with emptiness as I roll out the cookie dough or hang his special ornament on our treasure tree.

I think that hurt will always be with me, but now I know it only as a momentary ache - not like the first year when grief washed over me in waves, each new wave hurling me deeper and deeper into despair.

And it's not like the second year's hurt when I found myself both surprised and angry that IT hadn't gone away yet. I grew anxious about my sanity in the third year when my hands shook as I unwrapped the precious ornaments. When was I going to get better?! When was grief going to end?! Was I doomed to suffer miserably at every holiday for the rest of my life?!

The year the little satin balls fell off the tree, I gave up. Even the Christmas tree died! As my daughter and I dragged the brittle (and shedding) mess out into the snowdrift on Christmas morning, I knew we had reached the bottom. He had died, but we were alive. Had our grief so permeated our house, our lives that even a Christmas tree could not survive? His death was more than enough...had we lost love, too?

That was the year we began to understand. And that was the year we decided to keep Christmas anyway. So what if our now completely bare tree was stuck in the snowdrift, already waiting for the garbage men? So what if the cookies were still a bit too salty with tears?

In the middle of that Christmas day, now years past, we returned to that forlorn, frozen stick of a tree. And carefully, we hung the bare branches with popcorn strings and suet balls (not quite the same as satin!). I'm sure we were a strange sight that afternoon, but with a mixture of tears and snowflakes, we began to let the hurt out and make room for the healing to begin.

With each kernel strung, we found ourselves remembering. Some memories came with pain. Others began to grow within us - warming heart-places we thought had frozen long ago.

By the time we were finished, we were exhausted. Memories take a lot of work! At last we had a tree (although it was not the one we were expecting), but we had one, decorated with tears and memories, sadness and remembered laughter.

And now we've grown older (and maybe a little wiser) and we've learned that love isn't something you toss out, bury, pack away, or forget. Love isn't something that ends with death. Life can become good and whole and complete once again not when we try to till 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.

We saved a tiny twig from that frozen tree...to remind us of what we almost lost. That was the year we chose to let Christmas come back. Now we don't have to wait for joy to return. For now we know it lives within us - where Christmas is EVERY DAY.

~Darcy Sims

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First Christmas

It can't possibly be Christmas
without her being here.
Yet the world is singing round me,
joyful tidings and good cheer.

Though I try to put on armor
and brave the sights and sounds,
a few moments worth of shopping,
and the tears are spilling down.

I pray for strength to do it,
find a path through holidays,
look for shortcuts, good ideas,
some directions through the maze.

Then I find at last the answer:
I'll include her symbolically.
And the giving becomes perfect;
her love's flowing down, through me.

~Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From "Stars in the Deepest Night"
After the Death of a Child



May your holiday season be filled
with moments of peace
and special memories of the past.



Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

- December 1- Deadline** to send in order for luminary
December 7- Holiday Potluck @ 6:30 (SEE BELOW)
December 10 - Candle Light Remembrance Program @ 6:30
January 4 - "Grief in Couples" or "Grieving Alone"
We will have separate sharing rooms for these two topics.

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 is:
Vanessa Shott, mother of Andrew

Holiday Potluck Dinner



December 7 @ 6:30

Our December meeting will be our Holiday Potluck Dinner. Please bring your favorite, or maybe your child's favorite dish to share with our group. Paper goods, **dessert** and **drinks will be provided.** Our meeting will begin **at 6:30** instead of 7:00 for this special dinner meeting only.

Don't Forget!



The deadline is Dec. 1st to send in your order for a luminary in memory of your child, sibling, or grandchild to be used at our Candle Lighting Program. This is the only fundraiser our chapter has and is such a special way to honor and remember your loved one. Remember the luminary is yours to take home after the program!

NEWS FLASH!

Starting as of January 2017 our newsletter will now be bi-monthly. In other words you will receive a newsletter every other month. Each newsletter will cover two months. If you have any questions regarding this or Love Gifts, please contact Alice at 252-4374 or email TCF.SCV@gmail.com.



17th Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

December 10 @ 6:30PM

We hope to see all of you at our Candle Lighting Remembrance Program on Sunday, December 10 beginning at **6:30PM** at a new indoor venue located at La Mesa Jr. High School, 26623 May Way, Santa Clarita, 91351.

This very touching evening includes music, featured performers, video presentation, the reading of poems, and the lighting of candles (battery operated) which will be provided to all who attend.

We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. This candle lighting ceremony is a symbolic way of showing the love we continue to carry for our children, even though they are no longer with us physically.

Please invite your friends, neighbors, and family to come and share with you this very moving celebration of all children who have died. If you can't be with us, be sure to light a candle at home so that...

"their light may always shine"

By the way, we are looking for volunteers to help clean up after the ceremony. Let us know if you would be willing to help, Thanks!



Christmas

In this season of love
 when we know
 more than ever
 that we have forgotten nothing -
 in this season of love
 let us also give thanks
 for
 knowing
 love.

~Sascha Wagner



Full Hearts & Empty Stockings

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care...This happy family tradition becomes yet another painful reminder of all that we've lost. What do you do about the stocking? Do you hang it up or leave it in the box? Leave it empty or fill it with goodies? Or simply skip the tradition altogether?

With a little thought and imagination, the Christmas stocking can become a symbol of family unity and love. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. Pin your loved one's pictures on the outside of the stocking.
2. Ask friends and family to write a letter to your loved one and decide on a special time to take turns reading them aloud. (Have a box of tissues handy)
3. Fill the stocking with toys for a needy child.
4. Fill the stocking with some of your loved one's cherished belongings that you plan to give to family members and let these be the last gifts you pass out.
5. Tuck a happy family surprise perhaps the promise of a trip or special outing-into your loved one's stocking. Make the stocking bulge with love notes-one to every family member. Tell each person how much they mean to you.
6. Fill a loved one's stocking with sweet memories, or symbols of love. Fill it with hope and faith. Fill it with the promise of bright tomorrow's. Hang the stocking with care.

~Margaret Brownley

Reprinted from *A Journey Together*, Nov/Dec 2002
www.bereavementparentsusa.org



Holiday Reflections

Christmas and Hanukkah are upon us once more. December is an emotion-laden month for most adults. We pause and ponder the meaning of "peace on earth, good will toward men." We touch base with our beliefs, rituals, traditions and treasured memories. In passing on this heritage to our children, we are like conduits connecting past, present and future. It is a bit of immortality, a sense of tradition flowing from generation to generation.

It is these very essence of the holidays that stabs at the heart of bereaved parents. Our children represent the future. We may wonder what is the point of tradition with so many pieces of the future dead. Each grieving parent must struggle to answer that question effectively in order to establish a framework for the holiday season. Since we cannot ignore it or make it go away, we can deal with the situation by making specific plans with our families. We can assess priorities. We can make changes. We can decide which traditions to uphold and which to set aside this year. We can choose to acknowledge openly to our children our grief. We can think about some very special gifts.

To ourselves, we can grant the gift of acceptance by realizing that our grief is a necessary healing process. To our families, we can extend the gift of empathy by remembering that they, too, hurt. To our missing children, we can bestow the gift of homage by determining to work through grief so that we may live life to the fullest.

~Candy McLaughlin
 TCF, Minneapolis, MN



CHANUKAH IS HERE

Chanukah is here.
 I see the candles glow,
 red, pink, and blue.
 But you're not here to see their pretty shadows.
 I shop for gifts,
 And this year, again,
 once more I won't be in a
 quandary of what to buy.
 I give you my love, my precious son,
 for that is eternal.
 And once again,
 It will have to do.

~Ginnette Kravel
 TCF, Central Jersey



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Gary & Shelly Carter

In Loving Memory of their Daughter:

Sarah Noelle Carter

12/27 – 1/26



To our love,
We can't believe you have been gone almost five years. We miss you as much now as we did then. You are our angel in heaven who lights our way every day. You are loved yesterday, today & tomorrow...

Always from our hearts,
Love, Mom & Dad

Jim & Susan Kirk

In Loving Memory of their
Son & Daughter

Justin Knopf

11/28 - 11/21



Jamie Knopf

10/21 – 11/21



Marilyn Lemke & Tony Lemke

In Loving Memory of her Son
and his Brother

Billy Lemke

2/12 – 12/18



Patricia Patton, Ph. D.

In Loving Memory of
All Our Children

*Sometimes our hearts borrow
from our yesterdays.
And with each remembrance
we meet again with those we love.*

~unknown



"Forever In Our Hearts"



Our Children/Siblings Remembered



December 2017

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
<i>Daniel Lee Lieberman</i>	<i>5/4</i>	<i>12/31</i>	<i>Son of Dot Lieberman Brother of Dayna, Jason</i>
<i>Joshua Harley Sparage</i>	<i>12/24</i>	<i>8/6</i>	<i>Son of Bonnie & Gary Sparage Brother of Jeremy</i>
<i>Alicia Carolyn Overman</i>	<i>12/24</i>	<i>12/16</i>	<i>Daughter of Cliff & Terry Kelling</i>
<i>Eric Spencer</i>	<i>12/29</i>	<i>11/2</i>	<i>Son of Bobbie Mathers</i>
<i>Anthony Amodio</i>	<i>4/28</i>	<i>12/26</i>	<i>Son of Lynn & Michael Olds Brother of Briana</i>
<i>William Lemke, Jr.</i>	<i>2/12</i>	<i>12/18</i>	<i>Son of Marilyn Lemke Brother of Tony</i>
<i>Whitney Rebecca Moore</i>	<i>7/1</i>	<i>12/12</i>	<i>Daughter of Steve & Beth Moore Sister of Colin, Nick Granddaughter of Tom & Donna Rogers</i>
<i>Sarah Noelle Carter</i>	<i>12/27</i>	<i>1/26</i>	<i>Daughter of Gary & Shelly Carter</i>
<i>Anthony Michael Tumasone</i>	<i>12/15</i>	<i>3/18</i>	<i>Son of Tony & Brenda Brother of Gina, Chris</i>
<i>Casey Aaron Ray</i>	<i>12/5</i>	<i>3/14</i>	<i>Son of Kevin & Tracey Ray</i>
<i>Julian Nicholas Nava</i>	<i>12/27</i>	<i>10/11</i>	<i>Son of Richard & Diane Fonseca Brother of Terina, Marissa, Anniss, Daniel</i>
<i>Kevin Scott Rickhoff</i>	<i>4/30</i>	<i>12/09</i>	<i>Son of Paul & Nancy Rickhoff</i>
<i>Mindi Flancer Loux</i>	<i>2/16</i>	<i>12/6</i>	<i>Daughter of Harriet Flancer</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.