



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

January/February 2018

Volume 19, No. 1



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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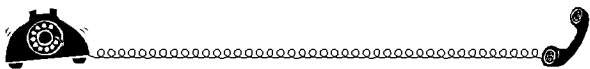
MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month.
Our next meetings will be **January 4, 2018 & February 1, 2018**

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, 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



Windows

The breath of winter
painted fragile stars
on all the windows
of my quite house.

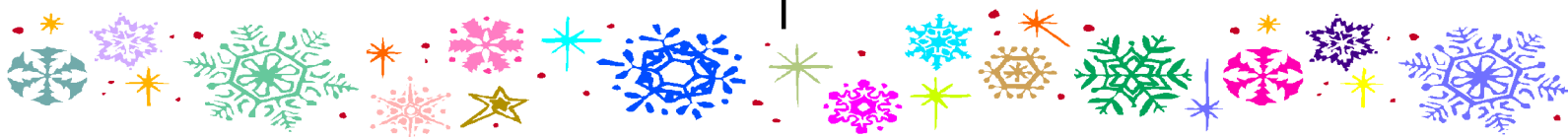
And there I found
your face,
more fragile even
than the season's art,
a wonder to my eyes.

How can it be
that winter paints
such secret things
in white-and silver sheen
for those who cry alone
at frosted windows?

~Sascha Wagner
From the book "For You From Sascha"

*Sometimes love is for a moment.
Sometimes love is for a lifetime.
Sometimes a moment is a lifetime.*

~Pamela S. Adams
TCF, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada





The New Year: A Time of Hope

Another New Year has slipped into our lives, radically changing some things and leaving other things to evolve naturally. For bereaved parents a new year marks another year on the calendar without their precious children. It is a new year, but not much had changed since the old year. Why is that?

We act as the catalysts of change for ourselves. We choose to help our selves; we choose to stay in a specific place in our grief, We choose to reach out for hope or we choose to withdraw into the familiar and postpone facing life and hope another day. There are no set rules or specific timetables in bereavement. We are each unique in our grief.

Eventually we all find hope. We find it in different ways and in different times. There will be no one moment of epiphany for bereaved parents. Instead, there are a series of minutes, hours, weeks, months and often years until we realize that we can truly say we feel the power of hope coming alive from deep within us. This moment will come for each of us. It will come in its own time and its own way.

Even those of us who have found hope and who shine its light on the paths of newly bereaved parents, still regress and withdraw into the dark sadness of our loss. And that is as it should be. For we have lost the most precious gift of our lives...our children's presence with us and their future in this life. Our children live in our hearts and our memories and our dreams. They do not share this place with us. It is normal and it is good to think of our children often and to shed some tears for all that has been lost. These aren't setbacks as much as sweet memories that bring cathartic tears.

The element we find in these memories is a closeness to our child and our child's life. This, too, is healthy. An often-express fear is that our children will be forgotten. Worry not, gentle parent, your child will be remembered for all of your days and for many days thereafter. You will never forget your child. Others who knew your child will never forget. The proof of this is in our memories...sweet memories that take us back to another time when our child was with us.

So this New Year's, whether you are a few months, a few years or many years in your grief, think about hope. You have not forsaken your child when you reach for hope. Your hope brings your child back in a

positive way that will warm your heart. Reach for that hope. As you move forward in your grief in the New Year, reach for hope. Your child will still be with you. And one day you will find your child's presence is sweeter when hope is within you.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF Katy, TX*

Ever think how our lives are so much like the wind? One day it blows from one direction the next a different one. Our emotions are very much like that, one day we are going along then Wham! A change comes. Days will go on with a certain feeling, then it changes, we are so much like the wind, we never remain in one area.

The Winds Of Change

The wind of change blows through our lives,
bringing many changes
The North wind blows icy winds, and our lives it
rearranges.
The East winds blows turmoil,
bringing unsettled emotions to bear
The West wind blows moisture, with many tears to
share.

But the South wind blows warm, a healing to our life
Easing up the pain of a broken heart of strife.
Wind from all direction brings a mixture into our
lives,
blowing on the wind of change.
Some are gaunt and icy, some warm and healing,
they come in every range.
If the North wind blows upon your life today
Hold on, a wind of change is coming,
waiting to blow healing gentle winds your way.

Hoping gentle breezes for your day.

*~Sheila Simmons,
Dallas, GA*



Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

January 4 - "Grief in Couples" or "Grieving Alone"

We will have separate sharing rooms for these two topics.

February 1 - "A Broken Heart Still Beats"

NEWS FLASH!

Starting this month/issue January 2018 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 Light Remembrance Program

On Sunday, December 10, our chapter held its annual worldwide candle lighting program at La Mesa Jr. High School. It was one of more than 700 formal services held in 19 countries around the globe.

This year the winds were a bit mighty and our luminaries needed some help by being propped up despite having sand to hold them down. They still were a magnificent sight and tugged at your heart as you walked through the entrance of the auditorium.



As attendees came through the doors they were given a small remembrance of the night from our chapter. A white candle decorated with a glistening bow, and a beautiful butterfly in a variety of colors. Attached was a tag that read: "May this candle of light remind you of precious memories from the past and give you a shimmer of hope & peace".

We gathered together and filled the room that night in friendship and love with each other when most were celebrating the holidays to share the love for our children, grandchildren, and siblings. Compassionate Friends, relatives, neighbors, and some new faces were there to light the way. The stage was decorated so beautifully this year! Two large Christmas trees full with white and red poinsettias. The steps leading up to the stage on each side

were even decorated with red poinsettias. It made such an exquisite backdrop for the musicians and speakers!



As we listened to the wonderful musical performances and poem readings, you could see tears shimmering down cheeks and hear many weeping as they remembered! We lit our candles that signify the forever love in our hearts and watched as our loved ones faces floated across the screen. We were there to honor and remember their life and the times we'd been through.

It is our hope that this remembrance program lifted you out of the darkness for just a short time and that you felt the warmth of your loved one's memories and presence in your heart. It is our hope that you were given some small measure of peace for the holidays.

Thank you to the Steering Committee, Kathy & Gary Hilton, Jon Chaitt, Tom Renolds, Richard Costin, Bert Briones, Pahola Mascorro, and Keith Brown for all your help putting this event on, we appreciate it so very much!

If you weren't able to attend, we hope you were able to light a candle from home, so that... "their light may always shine."

~Alice Renolds
Editor

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner/Meeting

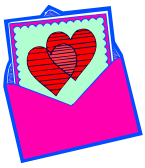


Our Chapter held its annual Holiday Pot Luck Dinner/Meeting on December 7. It was a terrific turnout this year!

Thank you to all those who attended and brought the delicious variety of food. It was a nice gathering of Compassionate Friends at a time when we most needed understanding and caring friends who share our pain during the holiday times!

Diane and I would like to wish all our members a New Year filled with hope, good health, and peace!

Diane Briones, Chapter Leader
Alice Renolds, Co-Leader



A Valentine for Mom

As we grow older, we find that the simple reflections of our children are often the best memories we have. One such memory most mothers have is a valentine.....maybe many valentines. These special valentines were made by our children just for us. They were made when mom was the most important person in their world.

Some of us have kept each little memento of our child's years....from the first little hand plaque to the handmade gifts and cards to the special gifts that our children purchased with their own money. Each one is a part of our child, a part of us and a part of our shared history.

My first valentine from my child was a handmade red construction paper heart glued to heart shaped white lace paper... On it he had written "Happy Valentine's Day to my MOM. I love you. Todd." Shyly he asked if I liked it. I told him I loved it, and that his valentine was the most beautiful valentine a mother could receive. It is a treasure I have always kept. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

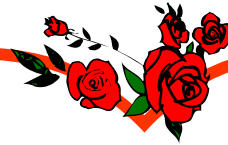
In my office I have a gift that Todd bought me five years ago. All grown up now with an MBA, bright future, important corporate job, family of four children, a beautiful new home, and major responsibilities, precious little time was available for finding the perfect gift for his mom. His life was busy; his free time was limited, but a something special caught his eye and he thought about me. He decided to buy it. A few weeks later, he gave me a brightly wrapped package containing a beautiful plate picturing a Sioux Indian princess. "She's beautiful, just beautiful", I told him. "Do you really like it?" he asked. The detail, the essence of her heritage and her outlook were captured perfectly. I told him, "I love it, Todd I'll keep her in the office so I can see her every day. I think she is beautiful." And she is in my office today, another treasure I will always keep. "I just wanted to be sure," he whispered.

Much has happened since my three year old son gave me that handmade valentine and my adult son gave me that special gift. The years have raced by; my son has been dead for over two years. And so this month I will open another special gift that my son bought me when he was still in college: my cedar chest. I'd always wanted a cedar chest for the special keepsakes marking our lives. That cedar chest contains pictures, cards, handmade gifts and other things that only a mother could hold in her hands while watching the movies play in her head. There are many movies in that cedar chest, but only I can see them. That is the beauty of memories.

Each of us has our memories of our child. Whether our child was 5 days old or 55 years old, we have special memories that are as much a part of us as our faces. Valentine's Day was always a special day for our family. We exchanged valentines and sometimes give a special gift.

This Valentine's Day I will send my son a special handwritten valentine, carried on the wind to the cosmos. The message will be simple. "Happy Valentine's Day to my SON, Todd. I love you. Your Mom."

*~Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*



*Those we love we
never lose,
For always,
they will be,
Loved, remembered,
treasured,
Always in our memory.*



The Wounded Heart

Children have preceded their parents in death for eons of time. We are not the first, no will we be the last to enter the realm of Bereaved Parents. But for now, right now, it is OUR HEARTS that are freshly wounded and OUR HEARTS in need of mending, Wounded hearts must be allowed to mourn and lament their loss; to pour out their pain, agony, sadness, hurt, and anger; and to release their well of tears. Wounded hearts need to be wrapped in quietness, gentleness, and compassion, away from the turmoil of daily life.

A wounded heart, not allowed to mend from the depth of its agony, will be as an abscess to swell and undermine, erupting at a distant time. Or, suppressed, will slowly choke the spirit of its host. Only the bearer will know when his heart has healed. The wounded heart, encouraged and given the time and freedom to mend, will carry in its chambers the memory and shared love of a precious child.

*~Nancy Green
TCF, Livonia, MI*



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Thomas & Donna Rogers

In Loving Memory of their
Granddaughter:

Whitney Rebecca Moore
7/1– 12/12



Pahola Mascorro

In Loving Memory her son:

Eli Rodriguez
9/26 - 2/17



A life that touches others goes on forever.
God has you in his arms and we have you in our
hearts. We miss you everyday.

Love you so much!
Mom & Destanee

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 10th 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!

Carol Lock

In Loving Memory of her Son:

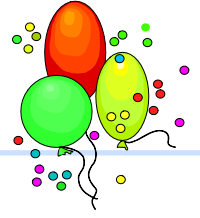
Darren Bullock
6/15– 11/15



“Forever In Our Hearts”

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

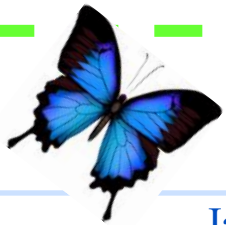


January

February

Name	Date	Member
Nigel Peddie	1/19	Bruce Peddie
Margret Smith	1/10	Sally Smith
Jennifer Stift	1/14	Monica Stift
Jennifer Stift	1/14	Kathleen Foote

Name	Date	Member
Sammy Thomas	2/1	Dave & Kay Thomas
William Lemke, Jr.	2/12	Marilyn Lemke
Megan Burton	2/5	Jennifer Burton
Edward Evans	2/28	Barbara Evans
Brent Clarke	2/23	Sue Clarke
Joseph	2/2	Raneem Nafeh
Mason Daigle	2/12	Victoria Daigle
Mindi Loux	2/16	Harriet Flancer



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

January

February

Name	Date	Member
Oliva Kares	1/12	Mike Kares
Oliva Kares	1/12	Julie Tate
Megan Burton	1/17	Jennifer Burton
Sarah Noelle Carter	1/26	Shelly Carter
Edward Evans	1/2	Barbara Evans
Travis Marton	1/1	Andrew & Ricki Marton
Eric Rodriguez	1/20	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez

Name	Date	Member
Daniel Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Timothy Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Walter Rodriguez	2/3	Carole Rodriguez
Jeanene Sykes	2/5	Ted Sykes
Santos Aguilar, Jr.	2/15	Santos & Carol Aguilar
Nigel Peddie	2/1	Bruce Peddie
Reese Stout	2/10	Linda Stout
Mason Daigle	2/23	Victoria Daigle
Eli Rodriguez	2/17	Pahola Mascorro

Griever's Progress

To my great surprise, there came a time, when something inside started to accept my ability to continue living. That is when healing may have become self-perpetuating. I can't recall when I first caught myself thinking "How on earth did I manage to survive?" It was more than a rhetorical question.

Once I became aware of one or the other facet of my survival and healing, I felt a need not only to respect life again, but also to appreciate my own courage (at least sometimes). While I still have very dark times, these are not so frequent now, and I do cope with them better. Perhaps I have learned to expect life to be tragic from time to time, therefore I seem to be more prepared for the slings and arrows.....

Today I understand that striving for perpetual inner peace is not necessarily a sign of spiritual strength. In trying to avoid painful grieving - through reason or through faith - one may also miss the deepest awareness of one's humanity.

*~Sascha Wagner
From Wintersun*