



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March-April 2019

Volume 20, No. 2



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 age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides 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 reiteration and beauty.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

P.O. Box 3696
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
Toll Free (877) 969-0010 *Fax (630) 990-0246
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TCFUSA

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

Mailing Address: 27949 Park Meadow Dr.
Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Email: TCF.SCV@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA
Website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

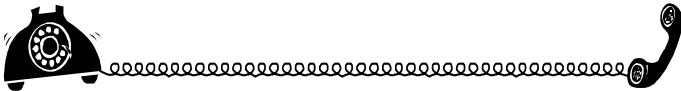
MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month.
Our next 2 meetings will be **March 7 and April 4.**

TIME: **7:00 PM**

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



Uneasy Word

Hope is not an easy word for griever
but we, more than most others,
need to understand
what hope can mean for us.

Hope means finding the strength
to live with grief.

Hope means nurturing with grace
the joy of remembrance.

Hope means embracing
with tenderness and pride
our own life
and the gifts left to us
by those we have lost.

~Sascha Wagner

*Have you discovered the secret - ? -
often what makes you cry
can also make you smile...*

~Sascha Wagner





What Time Is It?

The dreary days of January and February are past us, the end-of-the-year holidays are fading in memory, and we prepare to sit down and take a "breather." Here in the south, signs of spring come early, and by February's end we are seeing daffodils, jonquils, forsythia, crocus, and hyacinths. Soon after, the Japanese magnolias bloom, then the flowering fruit trees. Before long, we see the tight white blooms on the Bradfords. By the time we become aware of the change, March is here, with its winds.

And here come some more holidays. St. Patrick's Day with its parades and tomfoolery contrasts starkly with the restraint of Lent. The spring equinox reminds us that the world has officially declared "spring is here." Soon after follows Passover, then Easter, and we are reminded once again of our spiritual roots. And by the time Easter has passed, we are feeling again the sense of loss of our beloved child or sibling. Spring and its holidays are reminders of renewal, of rebirth, of continuation. For some of us, though, such feelings are out of reach – especially continuation. After all, that's exactly what we've lost – continuation. And instead of feelings of rebirth and hope, we may be feeling extremely mortal and vulnerable. As difficult as these feelings can be for us, our faith training may help us to reach up and out of the despondency. Old habits of celebration of spring's renewals may help us pass the critical moments until we can breathe again without so much pain.

For some, though, and I confess I am one of them, the worst time in these early spring months is not the holidays, but rather the return to daylight saving time. Now why would something like that cause pain for a bereaved parent or sibling? Well, for me, it's because it represents the time when my son would begin to pursue his outdoor activities – rock climbing, water sports, camping. These were his happiest times, the hours spent in pursuit of his enjoyment with his friends around to share it. Not that he didn't have fun in winter! He loved the winter. But he felt more alive in the spring and summer – he had more time (in his mind, anyway) each day to do the things he wanted.

So, now when I hear the dreaded phrase, "Spring forward; Fall back," I'm reminded all over again of my loss. The only "springing forward" for me is into memories.

-The Editors

*Lovingly Lifted From TCF Atlanta Newsletter
www.tcfatlanta.org*



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 friends and feel the love and yes, life that you thought died with your child.

*Nancy Cassell,
TCF Mommouth, NJ*

Imagine Hope



On March 30, 2014 our world was turned upside down when we got that knock on the door. The news no one wants to ever hear, our daughter Brianna had been killed. She was walking along the shoulder of highway 138 near Llano, CA when she was struck and killed.

She left behind her 6 year old autistic son, who she loved more than anything. Her dream was to be the best mom ever. Unfortunately, she was an addict and suffered from mental illness and this made it difficult for her to achieve that dream.

Brianna believed in always helping others. She helped to feed and shelter the homeless as well. Brianna wanted to be clean and sober so very much and be the mother that her son deserved. While her life ended tragically, we want to carry on her legacy of helping others and be remembered for all the good she believed in doing.

Four years after her accident we founded the Brianna Brandy Millard Smith's Happy Children Memorial Scholarship Fund on her birthday, October 6th. We will be helping fathers & mothers in treatment with their children who are completing inpatient treatment for drug or alcohol addiction and going to housing. The funds will help with rent expenses.

While forming the BBMS Happy Children Memorial Fund, I was going through some mementos for something Brianna had made. I came across her notebook from College of the Canyons, she was two credits away from her AA. On the cover was her drawing of heart balloons and the word she had written - **Imagine**. I showed it to her son Daniel and picked the word **HOPE** to have beneath it. It was perfect!

I could not have imagined hope after her accident, but helping others in her name is helping us **IMAGINE HOPE!**

~Laurie Millard

*In Loving Memory of Brianna Brandy Millard
TCF Santa Clarita, CA*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

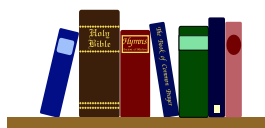
March 7 - "Emoji Me" Expressing our emotions through an Emoji.

April 4 - "Bucket O' Blooms" Using a flower to remind us or describe our child/grandchild or sibling.

Dear Compassionate Friends:

We are always looking for a little extra help and would welcome fresh and new ideas. Please consider joining our steering committee! We meet approximately every 3 months to plan our chapter's activities and manage our business matters.

*"An opportunity to **HELP**
is an opportunity to **HEAL**"*



Lending Library

At our monthly meetings we have a lending library where you can check out a book. We also welcome book donations. If you have any grief books lying around at home that you are done with that you would like to donate to help others, we would love to add them to our library in memory of your loved one. A label will be placed inside the front cover with their name!

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a good book you felt has been helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. We would love to include it in our newsletter with a small write up. Please send any reviews or articles for submission to TCV.SCV@gmail.com.

Also a friendly reminder, if you have any books at home that you borrowed and have finished reading, please remember to return them so that others may read them as well!

Thank You!



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, please just let Diane or Alice know ahead of time!

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:

Terence & Rakeia, Parents of Christian

Amado & Emma, Parents of Catarina



Grief & Laughter

After the death of a child, how many of us, as bereaved parents, might say to ourselves, "How can I ever smile again?" I know I felt that way following the death of my son. I have heard bereaved parents, especially during the early days after the loss, say, "I suddenly found myself laughing at work. How could I have done that?" After my son died, I went back to work one week after the funeral, and one of the first things I had to do was attend a department meeting. At one point, someone made a humorous remark. Everyone laughed, except me. One of my coworkers, seeing my poker face, called across the table, "Come on, don't look so sad." There were other times, too, when people thought I shouldn't be so glum, that I should be smiling or laughing. Once, while riding in my carpool, the driver turned around to me after observing my mask-like expression in the rearview mirror, and exclaimed, "Smile!" I remember retorting with some acerbity, "You smile." But in time I did smile. I did laugh. It must be the subconscious guilt within ourselves that denies us the right to smile or laugh. It happened—I don't remember how long it was—at least several months, I think. I have seen parents at a TCF meeting, whose loss is recent, with tear-stained faces, smile when someone at the meeting says something that tickles the funny bone. How many of us have heard our non-bereaved friends say to us, "How can you go to that support group? It's all sadness and gloom." How wrong they are! Of course, we cry at TCF, but there are moments of laughter, too. Crying and laughter, after all, are often interchangeable, such as crying at weddings or graduations and giggling inappropriately at the sight of someone taking an unceremonious pitfall on a slippery sidewalk. Perhaps laughter is also the beginning of Nature's way of mending, or healing us.

~Dave Ziv

TCF Southampton, PA Chapter



Spring Bursts Forth, And So Will You

Who could possibly disagree that we all look forward to spring? (For one thing, it means no more outrageously high fuel bills for a few months!) Most of all, we welcome all the evidence of new life after the seemingly endless cold, sometimes bleak and dreary days of winter. What a difference the new growth of leaves on the trees makes in the appearance of the landscape! There is the sudden burst of color in all the spring flowers and shrubs—from crocus to the beautifully array of colorful azaleas to the fragrant peonies that burst into bloom at the end of May. Somehow, all of this gives us a new burst of energy as we throw off our heavy, warm, restrictive clothing and grab our gardening tools to plant the vegetable gardens and flower beds. However, we still keep a sweater or a jacket close by for those times, now and then, which are too cool for comfort just yet.

So it is with us bereaved parents, for whom our whole world became a bleak, cold and desolate winter when a much loved child was suddenly torn out of our lives. If you are at this point in your life now, then it is possible you may not be able even to be aware of all the beauty of the earth all around you now or in the summer or even in the gloriously colorful fall to come. If this is where you are now in your grief, be very patient with yourself. There are those of us who have gone through several Springs without being aware of them. It was not even possible for us to smile, let alone laugh—and we were positive that we would never be able to do so. Does anyone remember the first time he laughed, as I do? It was a least six months after the death of my son, and I was visiting with a very close friend who made some comment which must have struck just the right chord within me, and I LAUGHED. It was such a shock to hear that sound come from ME that I actually reeled back in my chair and asked, unbelievably, “Did I do that?” For me, that was the first small burst of spring coming back into my life! But, of course, I still had a long way to go.

Be assured—there can be a spring in your life again! But you will have to work for it. It won't come if you just sit back and do nothing. Only you can be the judge of what it is you should do. Although you do have very special needs at this time and it is important not to push yourself beyond the point of your endurance, it may be necessary in the beginning to force yourself moderately to begin the work of building a new life for yourself. Eventually, you, too, will feel the first small burst of spring coming back into your life. During this time, you will still need the protective covering of an understanding Compassionate Friend, as we sometimes need the protective covering of our jackets and sweaters on chilly nights in the spring.

In time, you can be the Compassionate Friend helping other newly-bereaved parents. BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN, AND KNOW THAT YOU WILL.

~Grace Remsberg
TCF/Harrisburg, PA

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

Happy Passover

Jews throughout the world will celebrate the holiday of Passover this month. Passover has been called our favorite holiday because it operates on so many levels. It is a time of triumph, but it is also a time of tears.



Perhaps at no other time do we feel the absence of our loved one more than at the time of Passover. As we gather around the table, we cannot help but recall those who were so dear to us in life and who are with us here no more. We recall them in friendship and in love, for Passover is the time of family service. But even as we mourn their loss, we understand that the life of the dead is now placed in the memory of the living. Spring and Passover are a time of new hope and new life.

~Rabbi Dr. Earl Grollman

~reprinted from Arlington, DC,
Leesburg, Prince William, and Burke-Springfield-
Fairfax Virginia Chapters
April 2008



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Linda Stout

In Loving Memory of her daughter:

Reese Marleen Stout

4/30– 2/10



Birthday in Heaven

It's your birthday up in heaven
and I'm wondering what you'll do..

Will there be a celebration
and a cake to honor you?

Are the kitchen angels busy
breaking eggs and sifting flour?
Is the angel choir practicing
as it gets close to the hour?

Is there ice cream made from snowflakes
and some candy made from clouds?
Will it be just you and Jesus
or all the happy crowds?

I won't be there to hug you
or to count and pull your ears..
And I'm sure I'll feel lonely
as I shed some birthday tears

But I know your Heavenly birthday
will be your best one ever..
Just remember, I still love you
on your birthday and forever!

*~By Connie Faust
Facebook.com/heavengarden.angel*

We love and miss you,
Mommy & Bubbba

David & Laurie Millard

In Loving Memory of their daughter:

Brianna Brandy Millard Smith

10/6 - 3/30



*Barbara Cunningham,
Kathleen Brown, &
Vi White*

In Loving Memory of all the
Children of the Santa Clarita Valley

*"Like the gentle, unseen breeze,
the presence of those loved and lost
remains with us always."*

~Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays



March

Name	Date	Member
Timothy Renolds	3/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Michael Rodriguez	3/7	Debbie DiCorrado
Jeanene Sykes	3/2	Ted Sykes
Melissa Matters	3/26	Kirk & Dianne Mueller
Colleen Brown	3/17	Keith & Lin Brown
Bailey Haney	3/28	Myra Kulick
Melissa Duhe	3/31	Cindy Tiekenski
Alan Bartfai	3/8	John & Susan
Taylor Brand	3/23	Bret & Teresa
Myles Lind	3/6	Cathy Pullum
Jeremy Silverstein	3/31	Mel & Jeniffer

April

Name	Date	Member
Erik Fleischer	4/26	Rita Fleischer
Bradley McBurney	4/22	Tammy Gauld
Walter Rodriguez	4/25	Carole Rodriguez
Anthony Amodio	4/28	Lynn Olds
Adam Bouziane	4/15	Laura Erdmann
Melissa Lind	4/23	Marcy Torrey
Reese Stout	4/30	Linda Stout
Nadia Esmaeel	4/20	Deanna Esmaeel
Kevin Rickhoff	4/30	Nancy Rickhoff
Jacob Kaplan	4/1	Michael & Robyn



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

March

Name	Date	Member
Sean McPhie	3/9	Fran McPhie
Anthony Tumasone	3/18	Brenda Tumasone
Brianna Smith	3/30	David & Laurie Millard
Nicholas Colley	3/28	Scott & Jade Colley
Casey Ray	3/14	Tracey Ray
Aiden Lopez	3/26	Cesar & Jessica Lopez
Aiden Lopez Grandchild	3/26	Carmen Smith
Margaret Smith	3/20	Sally Smith
Monique Gutierrez	3/24	Irene Frenes
Myles Lind	3/18	Cathy Pullum

April

Name	Date	Member
Sammy Thomas Grandchild	4/10	Kay & Dave Thomas
Wallace Potter	4/24	Shirley Potter
Michael Arvizu	4/22	Robert & Juanita
Amber Brown	4/15	Mary Ann Mogan
Justin Hakola	4/11	Cheryl Landreth
Aurora Boehlert-Rubinfeld	4/10	Aron & April



Message

When the child you have cherished is taken,
when the light of that promise is gone,
when the faith which sustained you is shaken
and your days stumble painfully on,

When the sorrows of loss are unending
and your God seems forever away,
find the message your lost-one keeps sending:
words of loving and thanking and mending...
let your child shape the peace of your day.

~Sascha Wagner