



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March-April 2021

Volume 22, 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 reparation and beauty.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

48660 Pontiac Trail #3930808
 Wixom, MI 48393
 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.companionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month The next two meetings are:

March 4, 2021-ZOOM Meeting
April 1, 2021-ZOOM Meeting

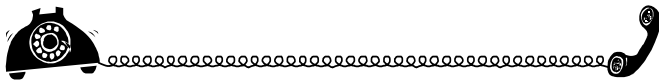
TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING **New Life Assembly of God**

PLACE: **27053 Honby Ave.**

Canyon Country, CA 91351

(Please note) This will be our new location for Meetings when we are permitted to have them inside again. More info on page 3.



FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISTENER, PLEASE CALL:

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-252-4654
 Alice Renolds (Co-Leader) 661-252-4374
 Kathy Kelly (Treasurer) 661-724-1450

Linda Stout (Facebook Manager)
 Ellena Cates (Remembrance Secretary)
 Steve Crittenden (Webmaster)
 Jeanne Crittenden (Zoom & Button Manager)



You're Just a Thought Away

Distance takes us far apart and darkens my today.
 I have to keep remembering-
 You're just a thought away.
 When the world is too confusing,
 and times are hard to bear,
 I pull your precious meaning,
 Your bright spirit, from the air.
 And if I sometimes drift
 Into a lonely state of mind,
 I gather up the memories
 Of the days now left behind.
 And though you're not beside me,
 I can tap into my heart
 And draw upon the warmth and love
 That now lives while we're apart.
 And with these fond reflections
 On the times when you were near,
 I sense a little bit of what
 It's like to have you here.

~Bruce B. Wilmer
 TCF Brisbane, Australia

*Behind each dark flower of sorrow
 waits a memory of
 the blessings you shared.*

~Sascha Wagner



GRIEF: THE PRICE WE PAY FOR LOVE

Grief is a NATURAL and NORMAL reaction to loss, loss of any kind. It is a physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological response. The death of a loved one is perhaps the most devastating loss one may experience. Yet, grief occurs following ANY change in our lives. Even positive changes can bring a momentary grief response.

Grief is a complex process, guided by our past experiences, our religious beliefs, our socio-economic situation, our physical health and the cause of the loss. LOVE, ANGER, FEAR, FRUSTRATION, LONELINESS and GUILT are all part of grief. It is important to understand that grief is NOT a sign of weakness nor a lack of faith. GRIEF IS THE PRICE WE PAY FOR LOVE.

Grieving may cause physical and behavioral changes such as: sleep irregularities, changes in appetite, gastrointestinal disturbances, "heartache", restlessness, spontaneous crying, irritability, sighing or muscle tension.

Anger and guilt are common emotions. You may feel angry with God, your spouse, your children or with others, either involved or totally separate from the death. You may be angry with yourself. Guilt feelings often accompany or follow anger. You may want to withdraw and be left alone.

Depression, feelings of emptiness or hollowness may temporarily overcome you. You may experience headaches, tightness in the throat or chest, muscle aches, or burning sensation in your stomach. GRIEF HURTS! You may, for a while, become preoccupied with images of your loved one. You may "see" or sense your loved one's presence. You may begin to wonder if you are going crazy.

You can help yourself through grief.

1. Acknowledge the loss.
2. Accept the pain of grief. Try to live THROUGH it, not avoid it.
3. Share your thoughts and feelings. Find enough compassionate listeners. You can talk - - more than one person can listen!
4. Understand that each person has an individual timetable for grief. Each person grieves separately and differently. We move through grief at our own pace.
5. Find your sense of humor. Try to hang on to it!
6. Get some physical exercise. If nothing else, jog your memory.
7. Learn to hug again.
8. Accept yourself. Understand you are someone new. Acknowledge that change.
9. Begin to become the person you already are . . .
10. Remember, though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!!!

*~Darcie Sims, Ph.D., CGC, CHT
~reprinted from the Sugarland, TX TCF Chapter
June 2008 Newsletter*

A Storm of Grief



When a storm of grief grows in the heart,
Reach back for yesterday
To catch onto your memories.

The storm will calm, and for a brief moment
The lost feeling of happiness
Will shine through and through.

*~Lori Pollard,
TCF Montgomery, AL*



Open Up

Each of us
Is on our own journey,
Starting out with a sharp shock of pain,
Descend into a dark cave of grief;
Swallowed up in sorrow...

Open up
The possibilities are endless,
In sorrow and in pain.
I know that now,
And I know
That while the worst can happen
Somehow we go on.

Open up
To the limits of blue sky.
Starting in the dark cave of grief,
The beast uncoils.
Let it roar,
Let it whimper,
Let it go.

Open up
To the acknowledgment of pain.
To the knowing that
We are not in control.
We move in and out from darkness
To possibilities.

Open up
Like spring flowers pushing
Up through the snow.
Knowledge that while sorrow remains,
And the beast of grief lives on,
So too does memory.

*~Melissa Anne Schroeter
TCF Rockland County, NY
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Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

March 4 – ZOOM Meeting

April 1 – ZOOM Meeting



This I Can Share

I have not experienced the death of my only child,
but some of us have.
I have not experienced a child dying by suicide,
but some of us have.
I have not watched my child fight a terminal illness,
but some of us have.
None of us would dare say, "I know just how you feel."
Even if our experiences are similar,
no two situations are exactly alike.
But I can say I remember the pain when my child died.
I remember the feelings of insanity.
I remember the feelings of loneliness.
I remember wishing I could die.
I remember wanting to share something with my child,
but he wasn't there.
So, my friend, our experiences have parts in common
and parts that are different.
So, why should we listen to each other?
Do we have anything to share?
Do we know what heartache feels like?
All of us do.
Do we know the numbness of grief?
All of us do.
Do we know what it's like to have empty arms?
All of us do.
So, let's learn what we can from commonalities.
We loved a child, but our child left too soon.
This we can share with you.

*~Marilyn Heavilin
TCF Inland Empire, CA*

"The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again."

~Simon Stephens, founder of The Compassionate Friends

Zoom Meetings

We hope that all of you, your family members and friends have been safe and healthy during these trying times. Our heart goes out to anyone who has been touched by this terrible pandemic!

Unfortunately, our meetings will continue to be held virtually until the restrictions are lifted. We hope that you will decide to join us for the March 4 and April 1 meeting via Zoom. You can use a smartphone or tablet if you do not have a computer. Please contact Jeanne Crittenden either by phone or text at 478-2948 or email joriesgirl56@gmail.com if you would like to have the link sent to you for the zoom meeting or would like further information. If you already attended the first meeting, you will be sent the link automatically,

We know that a Zoom meeting is not for everyone, but TCF wants you to know that you can reach out to us for support with a phone call or Facetime. Please reach out to the names below for some personal comfort and support.. Diane 661-252-4654, Alice 661-252-4374, Kathy Kelly 661-724-1450.



Book Review

Beyond Tears: Living After Losing A Child (Paperback)

Book Description:

The death of a child is that unimaginable loss no parent ever expects to face. In *Beyond Tears*, nine mothers have their individual stories of how to survive in the darkest hour. They candidly share with other bereaved parents what to expect in the first year and long beyond:

- *Harmonious relations can become strained
- *There is a new definition of what one considers "normal"
- *The question "how many children do you have?" can be devastating
- *Mothers and fathers mourn and cope differently
- *There simply is no answer to "why"

This sharing in itself is a catharsis and because each of these mothers lost her child at least seven years ago, she is in a unique position to provide perspective on what newly bereaved parents can expect to feel. The mothers of *Beyond Tears* offer reassurance that the clouds of grief do lessen with time and that grieving parents will find a way to live, and even laugh again.

*~Lovingly lifted from
TCF South Suburban Evergreen Park, IL*



Just One More Time

How many times have I woke on an Easter morning and smiled, knowing that the baskets were all set, the eggs dyed, and new clothes were waiting?

How many times have I watched with joy as the little hands reached for chocolate bunnies and jellybeans? The joy of those mornings will forever be etched in memory, sitting, waiting for a time to be brought to remembrance. The children are grown now, except one, who is forever frozen in time. The egg dye has been put away, the baskets hid in the attic with all the other keep able things from holidays and special events.

The children now have children and they go on their way in life, except one, who is frozen in time. The new clothes to be worn are now packed away in storage boxes filled with mothballs, hoping to be kept forever, never to be worn by one gone from my sight.

The waking hours of that Easter morn are different now. No longer do I lie in my bed and wait for those sounds of joy and laughter coming down the hall. The children are all grown now, except one, and she is gone from me. She was too old for childish things, stuffed bunnies and jellybeans, yet too young to give it all up. "Just one more year, mama, let me hold on to my youth and enjoy the wonders of that day", she said. Just one more year. Now she is gone, forever frozen in time, and her memory is engraved in my mind. "Just one more time..."

*~Barbara Sockwell, Snellville, GA
In Memory of Ashley Marie Sockwell
1/78-10//96*

Passover

Counting the years,
Blessings and tears,
Counting the children
Who are gone
From this earth.

Counting the memories
Of times past and done.
Blessing the children
On earth in this day of life.

*~Sascha Wagner
From "For You From Sascha"*

Change and Challenge



As I look back over the past six years since our son died, I realize how much I have changed. When we talk about grieving, we often forget to mention that we grieve, too, for the person we were before our child died. We might have been energetic and fun loving, but now are serious and absorbed.

Our friends and family miss the "old us" too, and their comments show it: "Don't you think it's time to return to normal?" or, "You don't laugh as much as you used to." They are grieving for the person who will never be the same again.

Like the caterpillar who shrouds itself in a cocoon, we shroud ourselves in grief when our child dies. We wonder, our families wonder, our friends wonder—when will they come out of it? Will they make it through the long sleep?

What hues will show when they emerge? If you've ever watched a butterfly struggle from the safety of a cocoon, you'll know that the change is not quick or easy—but worth the effort!

We begin to mark our struggle from the cocoon of grief when we begin to like the "new us." When our priorities become different and people become more important than things—when we grasp a hand that reaches and reach in turn to pull another from his own cocoon, when we embrace the change and turn the change into a challenge. Then we can proudly say, "I have survived against overwhelming odds. Even though my child's death is not worth the change in and of itself, the changes and challenges give me hope that I can feel fulfilled again. I can love again."



~TCF Appleton, Wisconsin



Spring Thaws the Wounded Heart

That first Spring came too soon.
Why did the daffodils show sunny faces around the gravestone?
Why did warm breezes blow clouds away?
My world, cold gray dismal had no room for this season.
Now years later the blossoms of love hope and healing have broken through grounds of utter despair warmed by memories of you.
I join the daffodils bringing my own smile.

~Alice J. Wisler

A Love Gift

Was Received From:



A Parent's Lament

I know not if there'll come a day
When I'll wake to not feel this way
The empty ache...the sudden fear
Reminds me you're no longer here

But in my dreams you still abide
As in days before these tears I've cried
Laughing, smiling...nary a care
I live in hope, but without a prayer

My friends tell me to 'just believe'
Then I won't feel the need to grieve
But that sounds much like 'letting go'
And so my response is always "no"

At times I think they may be right
That grief is a foe that I must fight
Is winning truly mine to choose
Or what's left, when nothing's left to lose

I see myself in some abyss
A void to fill with the YOU I miss
I can't be sure what happens now
All I know is this solemn vow

I'll take you with where e'er I go
To heights of dreams or in grief so low
For now I can only hope to heal
The pain I feel is all too real

Maybe somehow you'll be my guide
To live my life on the softer side
Beyond the torment of your loss
And lift the burden of this cross

For in you lies the chance to smile
If only for a little while
Your memories are my Joy to keep
And not just for when I sleep

*~Pat Thibault
TCF, We Need Not Walk Alone
Autumn/Winter 2014*

Linda Stout
In Loving Memory of her daughter:

Reese Stout
4/30 - 2/10



Happy Heavenly Birthday to our Queen,
Love Mommy, & Bubba (Brother)

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 up-coming newsletter. **But remember our newsletter is bi-monthly.** 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!

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

March

April

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Timothy Renolds	3/17	Tom & Alice Renolds	Erik Fleischer	4/26	Rita Fleischer
Michael Rodriguez	3/7	Debbie DiCorrado	Bradley McBurney	4/22	Tammy Gauld
Jeanene Sykes	3/2	Ted Sykes	Walter Rodriguez	4/25	Carole Rodriguez
Melissa Matters	3/26	Kirk & Dianne Mueller	Reese Stout	4/30	Linda Stout
Colleen Brown	3/17	Keith & Lin Brown	Kevin Rickhoff	4/30	Nancy Rickhoff
Bailey Haney	3/28	Myra Kulick	Jacob Kaplan	4/1	Michael & Robyn
Alan Bartfai	3/8	John & Susan	Emily Mogg	4/16	Jeffrey & Tracey
Jeremy Silverstein	3/31	Mel & Jeniffer	Emily Mogg Grandchild	4/16	Gary & Sandy
Amin Moinzadeh	3/21	Azita Azarpira			
Sean Goodman	3/8	Steve Goodman			



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

March

April

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Sean McPhie	3/9	Fran McPhie	Sammy Thomas Grandchild	4/10	Kay & Dave Thomas
Brianna Smith	3/30	David & Laurie Millard	Michael Arvizu	4/22	Robert & Juanita
Nicholas Colley	3/28	Scott & Jade Colley	Justin Hakola	4/11	Cheryl Landreth
Aiden Lopez	3/26	Cesar & Jessica Lopez	Aurora Boehlert-Rubinfeld	4/10	Aron & April
Aiden Lopez Grandchild	3/26	Carmen Smith			
Monique Gutierrez	3/24	Irene Frenes			
Jake Vachon	3/25	Michelle Vachon			
Tommy Sziklay	3/10	Keith & Lise Parcells			
Sean Goodman	3/6	Steve Goodman			

The Promise



Cold winds blow across the frozen pond.
 Snow lies deep upon the fields.
 But the change has begun.
 Daylight hours increase slowly.
 With each passing day later sunsets are more apparent.
 For bereaved parents the change is awfully slow.
 The progress is not always apparent but the promise is the same.
 Winter will end.
 Spring will return.

~Betty Stevens,
 TCF Baltimore, MD



*If I'd have had the
 chance to say goodbye,
 I wouldn't say goodbye,
 I'd say I love you.*

~Darcie Sims