



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

March 2017

Volume XVIII 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.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA

website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

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

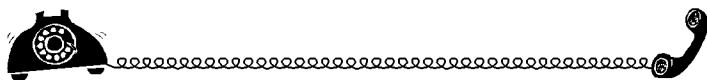
Our next meeting will be **March 2, 2017.**

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)



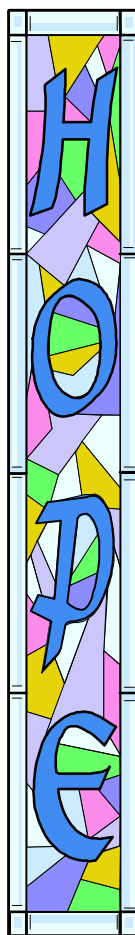
FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISTENER, PLEASE CALL:

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-252-4654

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

Carol Costin (Treasurer) 661-670-0395

Linda Stout (Remembrance Secretary) 661-202-8638



Uneasy Word

Hope is not an easy word for grievers 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





Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery,” when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experienced “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference – it’s all new to us. Actually the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying, to not a tear left – just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute.

After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM – back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic! There is something wrong – terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside – crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean, “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect. Our friends (well meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy. Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

~Mary Ehmann
TCF Valley Forge, PA

After Some Time - It is Still Okay to Cry

It seems to be acceptable to go for counseling or therapy during the early months of grief. But what happens after a certain amount of time has passed and you feel yourself being ambushed by the first raw feelings of grief? Most people think you should just buck up and look around you and count the blessings you have left. These are worthy and meritorious attitudes, but sometimes they are simply unattainable, at least for a little while. We have lost MUCH when we lost our child. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that it is okay to relapse, that there is nothing wrong with us when we feel alone and sad, that there is no shame in backtracking to the dark recesses of grief, for it is in those times when we give way to the hurt and pain that we acknowledge how MUCH our child continues to matter to us. We sometimes have to allow ourselves space to be sad and permission to cry over the simple sadness of no longer having our child with us. They MATTERED to us. They still do. WE CONTINUE to remember them, to love them, and to miss them. IT IS STILL OKAY TO CRY.

May each of you weep tears of release for the child that you so deeply continue to love and miss.

With the deepest respect and compassion for my fellow grievers.

~Faye McCord, TCF/Jackson, MS
In memory of Lane McCord (1/26-9/13)



Bittersweet

Bittersweet parents we are,
loving and giving still.
We render what tears
grief demands -
until, out of grieving darkness,
We come to celebrate
Our children's life,
And our own.

~Sascha Wagner
From: *Wintersun*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

March 2 - "Ask It Basket"

April 6 - "Healing Flowers" - Planting & Sharing Our Love



Survival Plan

There are times in the life of a bereaved parent when we are feeling fine and are going about our daily activities when suddenly, off in the distance, we begin to inwardly feel a change in the atmosphere of our soul. The rumbling storm clouds start to gather and an icy wind blows a cold rain through our heart. The dull ache that has been kept to a minimum suddenly becomes unbearable once again. We've been blindsided by grief. It's for times like these that we need to develop survival skills. We need to find a fallback position where we can seek shelter, calm ourselves, rest and regroup. The time to formulate this contingency plan is not when we're in the middle of agonizing sorrow, but when we are feeling and doing well. We can even make a list of ideas, put them into writing and save them for those moments when we are not able to think about what's going to help us in the midst of our blinding pain. What calms and soothes you the best when the bad days come and you're longing for the touch of your child? Would your respite be snuggling in bed under a warm blanket with a hot cup of tea or perhaps watching a favorite movie that you and your child would have enjoyed together? Maybe hugging and telling your surviving children or grandchildren how much you love and treasure them; would this ease your sorrow? Would writing a poem or love letter to your child and reading it out loud help afford you some peace? Would calling one of our Loving Listener's for comfort and understanding assist you during this difficult time? If you haven't been to a TCF meeting in a while, plan on attending the next one. Give yourself something to hold on to and look forward to. We all know that the death of our child is something that we will never "get over" but we can try to find ways to make it through the really bad days. We are here to help.

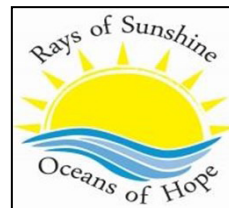
~Janet Reyes
TCF Alamo-Area Chapter, TX

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:
Dale & Holly, parents of Caitlin



Registration is Now Open

2017 TCF National Conference
July 28-30, 2017
Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek
Orlando, Florida

Conference Registration and Hotel Reservations are now open for the TCF 40th Annual National Conference. Please visit the national website, www.compassionatefriends.org as well as www.facebook.com/TCFUSA for further information.

LENDING LIBRARY



Our chapter has a lending library that is available during our monthly meetings. You may check out books and take them home to read and return the book when you are done reading it.

Just a friendly reminder, if by chance you have one or more of our books checked out and you are done with it, could you please return it so that someone else may have the opportunity to read it. Also, if you have some books that have helped you in your journey of grief and no longer need, why not donate them to our library in memory of your loved one! They may just also help someone else in need!

*I move a step ahead and then back,
but still gaining, if even but a little.*

~Mary Rapke, TCF Grand Junction, CO



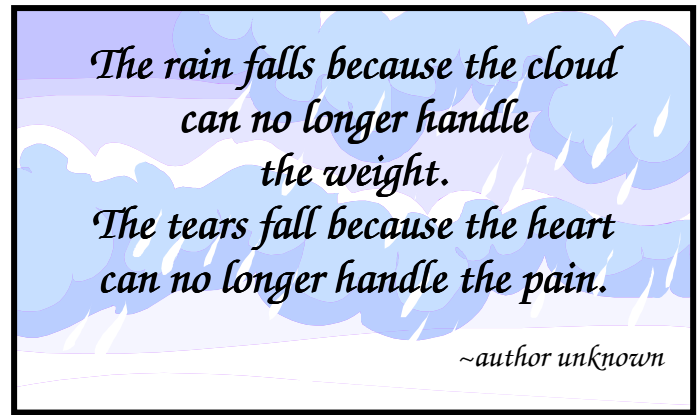
March Winds

He raced against the wind as if his life depended upon it.
Eyes bright, cheeks glowing from the still almost chilly
March wind,
Throwing me a smile now and then to make sure I was
watching.

I was, and when I caught a smile I applauded.
His effort so great for one small boy
I don't remember now if his kite ever flew - sometimes,
In spite of heroic efforts, they don't.
But I remember the day
The nip in the air
His cheeks glowing
His fresh, clean smell
My afternoon of playing catch
With his smiles...

I remember every year when March winds begin to blow.
Even if he had not died long after the age of flying kites,
I still would remember.
Maybe if he were still here,
Teaching his own small boy
The delicate art of flying kites
And catching his own smiles,
It wouldn't hurt so much
When March winds begin to blow.

*~From Songs from the Edge by Faye Harden,
lovingly lifted from TCF Tucson Chapter
Newsletter, Vol 14, No.4*



*The rain falls because the cloud
can no longer handle
the weight.
The tears fall because the heart
can no longer handle the pain.*

~author unknown



The Storm of Grief

It comes like a huge thunderbolt - shocking and deafening you to all else around you. Suddenly the world that has been so bright is black and desolate. There seems to be no hope.

The tears come like torrential rains. The winds of reality come, and your body is torn by the pains and fears caused by the storm. Even when the tears stop for a while, the dark clouds loom over you, threatening you with more tears and more pain.

Most passersby can't help you through the storm because they have never been caught in one like it - and some don't seem to care. There are a few who will reach out their hand and try to pull you from the storm, but the storm must be endured. And then there are the special ones - the ones who are willing to walk with you through the storm. Usually these are people who have been there before and know the storm can be survived.

After a time, the torrential rains turn to showers, and then the showers come less often. But the clouds don't go away. The sadness and pain remain, but they become more bearable.

Eventually, as the clouds begin to part, there may even be a rainbow— a sign of hope. And as the sun begins to shine a little more, flowers of memory will blossom to be enjoyed. I don't think the showers will ever end, but I believe as they get farther apart, the sky will get bluer; we will see more rainbows; and the flowers will bloom more and more.

Perhaps it's even good to have a shower now and then—to cleanse our souls and to revive those special flowers of memory.

*~Mary Jo Pierce
TCF Tuscaloosa, Alabama*



*Like a bird
singing in the rain,
Let grateful memories
survive in time
of sorrow.*



~Robert Lewis Stevenson

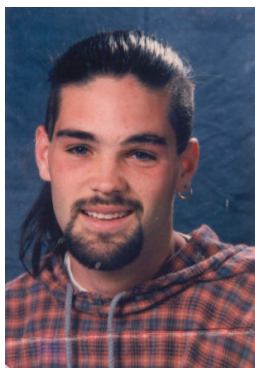
Were Received From:

Jim & Susan Kirk

In Loving Memory of their children:



Jamie Knopf
10/21 - 11/21



Justin Knopf
11/28 - 11/21

David & Laurie Millard

In Loving Memory of their daughter:

Brianna Brandy Millard Smith
10/6 - 3/30



Never Shall I Forget

Never shall I forget that day I reached home.
Never shall I forget the sparkling tears in their eyes.
Never shall I forget the air, heavy as it was.
Never shall I forget the melancholy voices and hushed tones.
Never shall I forget that news which stuck to the air,
thick like honey.
Never shall I forget how tears refused to add me to the tally
of salt-ridden faces in the room.
Never shall I forget my aunt had been killed.
Never.

~Dean Poduska

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!

Grief is the price we pay for love. We did not lose our children; they died, taking with them our hopes and dreams for the future – but never taking away their love. Though death comes, love will never go away. Hold it tight, the love our children gave us. Hold it tight through the storms of grief, and bring it with you into today. Love never goes away.

~Darcie Sims, Ph.D.
Author, Former TCF Board Member



"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Siblings/Grandchildren Remembered



March 2017

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Angel Date</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
<i>Timothy Lee Renolds</i>	<i>3/17</i>	<i>2/17</i>	<i>Son of Tom & Alice Renolds Brother of Scott</i>
<i>Michael Rodriguez</i>	<i>3/7</i>	<i>9/19</i>	<i>Son of Beatrice Rodriguez Brother of Debbie DiCorrado</i>
<i>Jeanene Sykes</i>	<i>3/2</i>	<i>2/5</i>	<i>Daughter of Ted Sykes</i>
<i>Sean Christopher McPhie</i>	<i>8/2</i>	<i>3/9</i>	<i>Son of Steve & Fran McPhie Brother of Brandon</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>Brianna Millard Smith</i>	<i>10/6</i>	<i>3/30</i>	<i>Daughter of David & Laurie Millard Sister of Jessica, Rosalie</i>
<i>Melissa Jane (Mueller) Matters</i>	<i>3/26</i>	<i>11/3</i>	<i>Daughter of Kirk & Dianne Mueller Sister of Jessica</i>
<i>Jonathan Michael Marinelli</i>	<i>5/19</i>	<i>3/8</i>	<i>Son of Carrie Cruse Brother of Matthew</i>
<i>Colleen Linette Brown</i>	<i>3/17</i>	<i>11/3</i>	<i>Daughter of Keith & Lin Brown</i>
<i>Bailey Lyn Haney</i>	<i>3/28</i>	<i>7/11</i>	<i>Granddaughter of Myra Kulick Brother of Jackson</i>
<i>Nicholas Scott Colley</i>	<i>8/22</i>	<i>3/28</i>	<i>Son of Scott & Jade Colley Brother of Alex, Cami</i>
<i>Robert Chavez</i>	<i>3/20</i>	<i>3/26</i>	<i>Son of Ruben & Maria Chavez Brother of Ruben</i>
<i>Casey Aaron Ray</i>	<i>12/5</i>	<i>3/14</i>	<i>Son of Kevin & Tracey Ray</i>
<i>Aiden Matthew Lopez</i>	<i>10/27</i>	<i>3/26</i>	<i>Son of Cesar & Jessica Grandson of William & Carmen Smith</i>
<i>Melissa Jane Matters</i>	<i>3/26</i>	<i>11/3</i>	<i>Daughter of Kirk & Dianne Mueller Sister of Jessica</i>
<i>Margaret Smith</i>	<i>1/10</i>	<i>3/20</i>	<i>Daughter of David & Sally Smith Sister of Brian, Zach</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.