



The Compassionate Friends
Santa Clarita Valley Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May-June 2019

Volume 20, 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 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.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

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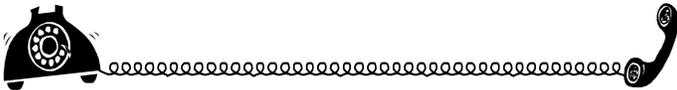
MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the
 1st Thursday of each month.
 Our next 2 meetings will be on **May 2 & June 6.**

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 LISTERNER,
 PLEASE CALL:**

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-252-4654
 Alice Renolds (Co-Leader) 661-252-4374
 Kathy Kelly (Treasurer) 661-724-1450
 Linda Stout (Remembrance Secretary) 661-202-8638



Requiem

The memories always linger
 In the shadows of the mind.
 The pain is always present
 As life and death unwind.
 The past is not forgotten
 When it's a part of you
 And a torch burns for others
 Whose dreams did not come true
 It hurts to lose a loved one
 Whose flower never bloomed,
 But dreams can be reborn
 If by you they are assumed.
 The flame of life may flicker
 Or become mere residue,
 But it cannot be extinguished
 If it brightly burns in you.

~Clay Harrison

*Let the joy of your loved one's life
 begin to take the place of the
 hurt and anger of the death.*

~Darcie D. Sims



*"Your silent tents of green,
We deck with fragrant flowers;
Yours has the suffering been,
The memory shall be ours."*

~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



On this Memorial Day, remembering our heroes who have fought for our freedom and paid the ultimate sacrifice, including their families. We also give thanks to those who have served and those still serving today!



Wisdom

As bereaved mothers, we know the joys and the pain of Mother's Day. Through the life and death of our child, we have loved much and lost much. We are far better people because of our children. Our wisdom surpasses anything we could have considered possible before our child died, for now we know loss, the darkest places of the human psyche, the deepest valley of the soul and the depths of insurmountable pain. This wisdom was not chosen by us. It is, nevertheless, our wisdom and experience to share with others as we choose. It is ours to keep in our minds as we live a life without our child. It is the purest wisdom one finds on this side of the moon.

We will continue to learn much about life as we live on after our child has gone. We were active participants in the lives of our children; we must be active participants in the mourning and grief following the deaths of our children. From this experience we grow...it is painful growth, but it is absolute growth of mind and spirit. As our growth increases exponentially, we find that, wondrously, we have come full circle.

One day we choose to focus on the life of our child. When that day comes, as it does for each of us, we are released from the darkness and despair and gently enter into the ambient glow of the light hope. Tentatively we take our first steps into the light. Then gradually we move with more confidence. The light glows brighter as we accept the healing it provides to us. As we heal, we reach out, we return to life, we work a little harder, love more deeply, and give freely to others. Our perspective turns outward. We will reflect, but we will not be enveloped by our grief. We will laugh again, we will smile. We will even act spontaneously on occasion. We will live...live in the shining light of hope.

And so, gentle mother, as you mark this Mother's Day, think of your child's life. Think of love. Think of times passed and those to come. Think of your journey. Think about your vast wisdom. Think about hope. You are a remarkable work in progress. Think about that.

Peace to you on Mother's Day.

*Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my only child, Todd Mennen
May, 2008
TCF Katy, TX*



MOTHER'S DAY

Another Mother's Day!
But a different one this year.
For, you see, I am a mother,
but my child isn't here.

I am a mother who is hurting
for this child who was so dear,
as I face this and other occasions,
each and every year.

I am a mother who feels an emptiness
over and over again,
because I miss this child
and all that could have been.

I am a mother who cared
as I watched my child grow,
and truly loved her more
than anyone will ever know.

I am a mother who has memories
and many tears to cry
over regrets I'll have to live with
until the day I'll die.

I am a mother who is thankful
for the miracle of birth,
and all my child has taught me
about life and my own self-worth.

I just can't stop being a mother
just because my child isn't here,
because the love we had for each other
will continue for years and years.

And so...

On this special "Mother's" Day,
I feel within my heart
all the pride, love, and joy
which are the parts
that make me who I am,
and what I'll always be -

A MOTHER!

Just remember that -
please?

*~Judy A. Sittner
From: Hope Line*

*Published by Hope for the Bereaved, Syracuse, NY
Lovingly Lifted from TCF Los Angeles, CA, May 2006*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

- May 2 - "Bucket of Blooms"** What bloom reminds you of your child/grandchild.
- June 2 - Family Picnic/Balloon Release** (SEE INFO BELOW)
- June 6 - "Men to the Left, Ladies to the Right"** Separate discussion groups for men and women tonight.



The Compassionate Friends 42nd National Conference July 19-21 in Philadelphia

This year's conference will be held at the Philadelphia 201 hotel on July 19-21 with the theme of "Hope Rings Out in Philadelphia".

Come spend a weekend surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting program culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the gift we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.

Choose to attend from nearly a hundred different workshops and sharing sessions, given by professionals and individuals just like you.

Pre-registration rates end June 15 and hotel rooms are going fast. Check TCF's national web page from more information www.compassionatefriends.org



Submit a Child's Name for TCF's National Walk to Remember

The Compassionate Friends Walk to Remember is a highlight of every TCF National Conference. It was created as a symbolic way to show the love we carry for the children we mourn and is held at 9:00am Sunday on the final day of the National Conference.

Even if you are not able to attend, you can be a part of this heartfelt event by sending them the names of the children, grandchildren and siblings whose memory you wish to honor.

They are also offering the opportunity to sponsor a personalized walk sign that includes your child's/grandchild's/sibling's photo and name. These walk signs will be featured along the walk route. To submit a name or order a sign, please go to <https://www.compassionatefriends.org/event/20th-annual-walk-to-remember/>

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:

Marco & Diana, Parents of Isabella
Gary & Sandy, Grandparents of Emily
Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Mogg, Parents of Emily
Jeanne Crittenden, Mother of Sarah
Debbie Gardner, Mother of Mindy



Balloon Release-Family Picnic Sunday, June 2

Our annual Balloon Release/Family Picnic will be at the Bouquet Canyon Park located at 28127 Wellston Dr., Saugus beginning at **1:00pm**. All members of TCF as well as family members & friends are invited to participate!

This family event includes a few songs, poems, and the release of balloons in memory of our children, siblings, and grandchildren.

Our chapter will be providing the main course, paper goods, dessert and balloons. All you need to **bring** is a **side dish** to share and your **own drinks**. You also might want to **bring a blanket or chairs for sitting** and if you have an extra **portable shade cover**, that would be great!

YOU MUST RSVP to Diane 661-252-4654, Alice 661 252-4374 or you can email TCF.SCV@gmail.com **by May 20, SO THAT WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH BALLOONS and FOOD FOR EVERYONE!!!**

PLEASE TRY TO ARRIVE ON TIME, we would like to start eating by 1:30.

Thank you,
The Steering Committee

Dear Compassionate Friends:

We are always looking for 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**"*

A Father Mourns Too



I just watched another TV commercial for cologne, which is the first sign of the approach of Father's Day. Like other fathers, I know the gift I'd like to get this Father's Day. Just as I know there is no way that it will happen—my son's life, an opportunity not to hurt when I see boys who are his age, a chance to dream those dreams for that little boy again. But that's not going to happen. Instead I will get up on that day, having called my own father the night before to wish him a happy Father's Day, and I will go to the cemetery to place flowers on my son's grave. I will stand alone and cry and for a time and then return home to my wife and new infant son. This year we will have a greater measure of peace because of the birth of our son, but I shall always have a hole in my soul, a longing that I know I will have until I die.

Like many bereaved fathers, I have felt misunderstood about how a father should mourn and for how long. I do not understand how a society can have such a belief in the strength of maternal love and do such a good job ignoring the intensity of paternal love. From the people whose only question at my son's memorial service was how was my wife dealing with this tragedy, to the longtime friend who didn't understand my choking up after watching a Hallmark commercial, it seems that many around us have difficulty understanding a father's grief.

So, support and love is needed badly. Of course, we have Compassionate Friends, but something more personal and closer to home is needed. I hope that bereaved fathers will not be forgotten on Father's Day. It is often said that we don't often talk of our emotional needs and are reluctant to show our pain, but we too need love when we hurt. Please remember us on Father's Day and remember that the cute little commercials that hurt mothers in May take their toll on fathers in June.

*~Doug Hughes
TCF Las Vegas, NV*

The Grief of Fathers Strength

In the early days of my grief, a tear would well up in my eyes, a lump would form in my throat, but you would not know—I would hide it, for the strong do not cry...

AND I AM STRONG

In the middle days of my grief, I would look ahead and see that wall that I had attempted to go around, as an ever present reminder of a wall yet unscaled. Yet I did not attempt to scale it, for the strong will survive...

AND I AM STRONG

In the later days of my grief, I learned to climb over the wall step by step—remembering, crying, grieving. And the tears flowed steadily as I painstakingly went over. The way was long, but I did make it...

FOR I AM STRONG

Near the resolution of my grief, a tear will well up in my eyes, a lump will form in my throat, but I will let that tear fall—and you will see it. Through it you will see that I still hurt and I care.

FOR I AM STRONG

*~Terry Jago
TCF Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada*



Graduation Time

It's June and graduation time again. Your child would have been among those wearing the cap and gown, walking down the aisle to the ever stirring "Pomp and Circumstance". Now there is a vacant spot in the line. Should you attend? Can you stand the pain? Will people think you are strange?

As always you must follow your heart. So, go if you'd like to and don't hide your tears. It's quite all right to miss your own child while celebrating the achievements of others.

Just remember: That your instincts are the most important ones; that no one else can make this decision for you, and that it doesn't really matter what other people think.

It was your child who died. This is your pain and you have the right to feel it and deal with it in your own way - and may a bit more healing take place in the doing.

*~Peggy Gibson,
TCF Nashville, TN*



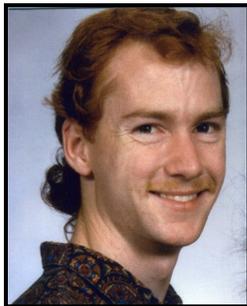
Love Gifts

Were Received From:

Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer

In Loving Memory of their sons:

Eric Spencer
12/29 - 11/2



Peter Spencer
2/5 - 9/4



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!

Everlasting Peace

"Where are you this day? Why have you gone?"

Your loved ones, in dreams, call out.
"We miss you so much that we hurt inside,"
Your family, in pain, seems to shout.

Our memories all come rushing back.
We hold you in our hearts.
You're with us now—and always.
The world can't keep us apart.

Your presence is so strongly felt,
We reach out with our arms,
And hold you close just one more time,
To keep you safe from harm.

We see you in our mind so clearly,
As if you're really there.
That we might reach with loving hand
And tenderly brush your hair.

We hear your soft and gentle voice.
It speaks to all we've known.
We understand that you're here with us,
And that you'll never be alone.

Your laughter and your joy live on
To cherish through the years.
We're thankful for the time we had
As we struggle through the tears.

Your spirit lives within us
And it can never, ever cease.
Your memory, in love, a source
Of everlasting peace!

*By Larry Leonard Fleischer
In memory of his son Erik
TCF, Santa Clarita, CA*

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays



May

Name	Date	Member
Jeffrey Costin	5/17	Richard & Carol Costin
Michael Arvizu	5/6	Robert & Juanita Arvizu
Santos Aguilar Jr.	5/12	Santos & Carol Aguilar
Christian Pratt	5/29	Terence & Rakeia Pratt-Smith
Monique Gutierrez (Grandchild)	5/29	Irene Frenes
Sarah Crittenden	5/30	Jeanne Crittenden

June

Name	Date	Member
Daniel Renolds	6/22	Tom & Alice Renolds
Wallace Potter	6/6	Shirley Potter
Darren Bullock	6/15	Carol Lock
Cyrena Becerra	6/11	Mona Gonzalez
Daniel McAlpine	6/27	Elaine Bottoms
Nicki Kent	6/15	Beth Kent
Mindy Siefert	6/7	Debbie Gardner



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

May

Name	Date	Member
Dwaine Laub	5/29	Mary Trimmel
Catarina Angelica	5/22	Amado & Emma
Nadia Esmaeel	5/19	Deanna

June

Name	Date	Member
Erik Fleischer	6/28	Rita Fleischer
Brian Berry	6/30	Steve Berry
Christopher Rodriguez	6/13	Barbara Rawson
Steven Sprague	6/18	Marie Sprague
Michael Kelly	6/10	Kathy Kelly
Lloyd Sreden	6/27	Maxine Sreden



Gentle Memories



We can be left with nothing greater than gentle memories of those who have touched many lives in numerous ways.

When we gather happy memories and hold them close to our hearts, the gentle spirit of peace will touch us.

And as we go on celebrating the time we had together, we'll find the treasure of remembering and the comfort of believing that each life is indeed a gift... to be held in our hearts forever!

~Unknown