



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

May-June 2020

Volume 22, 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 reparation 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](http://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.

Our next meeting will be on

June 4, 2020—NOT May 7, 2020

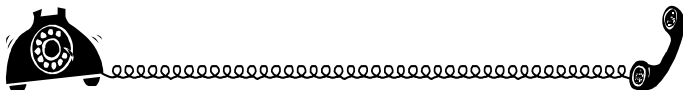
THE MAY MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED

Due to the Corona Virus Restrictions

TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING PLACE: **Fellowship Christian Church
 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
 Kathy Kelly (Treasurer) 661-724-1450
 Linda Stout (Remembrance Secretary) 661-202-8638



Heading the Call of Life

There is tremendous wisdom that is accumulated in one's encounter with grief, and it needs to be shared. Healing takes place when we turn our pain into a positive experience and we realize that helping others is the key to helping ourselves. When that happens, our problems don't look so big. We expand on newfound strengths and we discover that as one door closed, many others have opened. The road to recovery from grief, therefore, is to take time to do things which enable us to give new meaning to our lives.

That's when our journey through grief becomes a journey of discovering ourselves, our potential and our resources in the encounter in life.

That's when we become BETTER people, rather than BITTER people. In grief, no one can take away our pain because no one can take away our love.

That call to life is to learn to love....again.

*~Father Amaldo Pangrazzi
 TCF Muskegon, MI*

*Tears do not flow only from the
 pitiful and the weak,
 They spring also from the love
 and tenderness of the strong.
 We should never be ashamed of our tears,
 whether in private sorrow or public grieving.
 Tears alleviate our grief and encourage
 the healing of our wounds.*

~TCF Nacogdoches, TX



Surviving a Child on Mother's Day

If you're looking for an answer this Mother's Day to why God reclaimed your child, I don't know. I only know that thousands of mothers out there today desperately need an answer as to why they were permitted to go through the elation of carrying a child and then lose it to miscarriage, accident, violence, suicide, disease or drugs.

Motherhood isn't just a series of contractions; it's a state of mind. From the moment we know life is inside us, we feel a responsibility to protect and defend that human being. It's a promise we can't keep. We beat ourselves to death over that pledge. "If I hadn't worked through the eighth month." "If I had taken him/her to the doctor when he had a fever." "If I hadn't let him use the car that night." "If I hadn't been so naïve, I'd have noticed he was on drugs or needed help with depression.

"The longer I live, the more convinced I become that surviving changes us. After the bitterness, the anger, the guilt and despair are tempered by time, we look at life differently. While I was writing my book: "I Want to Grow Hair, I Want to Grow Up, I Want to Go to Boise," I talked with mothers who had lost a child to cancer. Every single one said that death gave their lives new meaning and purpose.

And who do you think prepared them for the rough, lonely road that they had to travel? – their dying child. They pointed their mothers toward the future and told them to keep going. The children had already accepted what their mothers were fighting to reject. Even those children who died a sudden death are able to spiritually touch their parents and help them live on.

The children in the bombed-out nursery in Oklahoma City have touched many lives. Workers who had probably given their kids a mechanical pat on the head without thinking that morning were making calls home during the day to their children to say, "I love you.

"Joy and life abound for millions of mothers on Mother's Day. It's also a day of appreciation and respect. I can think of no mothers who deserve it more than those who had to give a child back.

In the face of misery they ask, "Why me?" but there is no answer. Maybe they are the instruments who are left behind to perpetuate the lives that were lost and appreciate the times they had with their children. They are the ones who help pick up the pieces when tragedy occurs and others have lost their children.

-Erma Bombeck



May

May is kind ~

**None of March's bluster,
Or April's fickle pranks.**

**May is gentle sun,
And scented blossom,
Set apart, for spirit's ease.**

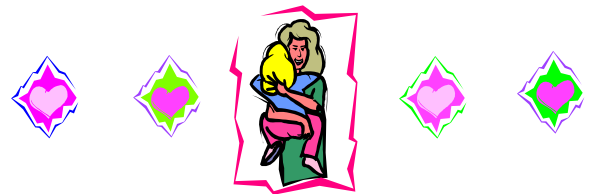
May cancels winter

**And the storms of spring.
She gives birth to warmer days.**

**May is Mother's month,
Expression of her best ~
Expectant, warm and nurturing.**

**May is a state of mind,
Perhaps a place of grace,
On the landscape of the heart.**

*Arleen Simmonds
TCF Kamloops, B.C.*



Mother's Day Denied

On this, my first Mother's Day, I asked myself, Do I have the right to celebrate Mother's Day? Have I truly been a mother this past year? The answer is yes.

Each day I have cared for my child as every mother does, except differently. In every way possible I have mothered him.

I have mothered him with every tear shed; through the agony of longing to hold him. I have rocked him in my heart, if not in my arms. I have kissed his little cheeks in my mind, if not with my lips. Smelled his sweetness with my hopes, if not my nose. Felt his skin with my memory, if not my hands. Ticked him with my wishes, if not with my fingers.

Am I a mother? I truly am. My physical mothering has been limited to lovingly tending his grave. But I am a mother all the same.

*~Michelle Parrish,
Columbia TCF Chapter, Baltimore, MD*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

May 7 - **CANCELLED**- Due to Coronavirus restrictions

June 4- **Words of Grief**- helping us through our journey.

ATTENTION !

Balloon Release Cancelled

Our Family Picnic/Balloon Release that was scheduled for Sunday, May 31 has been cancelled! Due to the Corona Virus restrictions and not knowing when they will be lifted to have a large gathering we need to cancel our event. It will be rescheduled for a later date. We will let you know of the new date as soon as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I am so excited to announce that two of our members have stepped up and taken over three of the job openings we had.

Please consider taking on this last job listed below:

Name Badges- Go to website, input new names, print on card stock and then cut.

If this a job that you might be able to help us with, please let me know. I will certainly be able to train you and be there every step of the way!

*~Thank You,
Alice Renolds, Co-Leader*

IMPORTANT!!!

Newsletter Renewal Time

Every two years we update our mailing list/data base, and it's that time again. Soon you will be receiving in the mail your newsletter renewal form. So please make sure that we have your most **up-to-date mailing address!!** When you receive your form, please fill it out and return it by the date noted on the form, if you would like to stay on our mailing list and continue receiving our newsletters and note cards.

*Thank you,
Alice Renolds, Editor*

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:

Michele Davis, Mother of Miles

Shane & Dena, Parents of Alexander

Loving Listeners

During these trying times with "Safer at Home" and "Self Isolation" we as bereaved parents are more than ever put to our limits with stress and anxiety added to our grief. TCF wants you to know that we are here for you even though our monthly meetings have been canceled. Below is a list of members and phone numbers that are available for you to call for a loving listener and hopefully they can lend some personal comfort and support for you.

Diane Briones 661-4654

Alice Renolds 661-252-4374

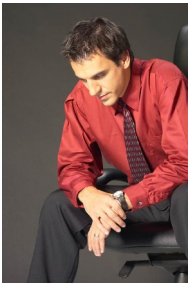
Kathy Kelly 661-724-1450 (Evenings Only)



The Gift of Someone Who Listens

Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.
It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.
Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears
We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.

*~Nancy Myerholtz
TCF Waterville Toledo, OH*



A FATHER'S JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF

From my perspective as a bereaved parent, the most powerful and meaningful thing someone can do for us is to stick with us today, tomorrow and forever. It's a blessing to be a father and have the gift of children in our lives, but when they die, the blessing can at times (in the beginning) feel like a curse because of our incredible sorrow. Since we can't have our kids physically in our life any longer, we want their memories brought to us in any form. Acknowledgement of our kids is important to a bereaved parent because the calls, cards and gifts are about the lives of our kids. Those memories are living, breathing snapshots of them. Bringing that back is a very good thing. A powerful and much appreciated thing. The comfort comes when our children are remembered. If we cry when our child's name is brought up, you don't create those tears. They're always only a heartbeat away. And, in most cases, those are tears from a grateful heart for remembering us. We appreciate so much that our children are not forgotten because once they die, they create no more memories. I never realized Brendon's past was so important until his future died.

As our support diminishes, we sometimes think our kids don't matter anymore to others. When friends and family stop talking about them, stop saying their name or remembering birth and death days, we think our kids are no longer important in their lives. Ultimately it's only us who needs to remember our kids, but when others do it's very, very nice. By speaking their name, sharing a memory, a photo or memento you're also validating us as parents. My son is dead, but I will always be his father. His death took his life on earth, but it didn't take our relationship. I still talk to him, wish him a good day and ask him to visit. I can no longer actively parent Bren, but I now see myself as the parent and caretaker of his memories.

A father's grief differs from a mother's in that our grief also encompasses the role of the protector. And the possible guilt of not having been able to do that for our kids. As the father, one of our responsibilities as defined by our culture (and maybe all cultures) is to safeguard our children from harm. "Daddy will protect me" is learned from an early age. When they died, many fathers experience extreme guilt because they didn't feel they did their job. Why didn't I take away the keys? Why didn't I see the symptoms earlier and act on them? Why? Why? That guilt can be hard to let go. I'm fortunate in that I never had that issue on my plate. But, I do know that

"letting go" has been one of the most productive things I've done for myself. Especially letting go of the expectations of myself and expectations of what I think others want me to be.

I've come to realize that grieving and healing are synonymous terms. As we grieve we heal. Conversely, if we don't grieve, it's much harder to heal. It took a long time for me to understand that for myself. I used to think that grieving made my life worse. How could my tears and pain be doing me any good? But, I now know that the tears, release of anger, talking, sharing and confronting my pain are all part of my grief work which has helped me heal. Just like any other job, we have to do our work to reap the benefits. Grief work is the hardest job I will ever have.

I miss Bren with all my heart and soul, but I would not give up one moment of my pain if it meant giving up one moment of my love. I miss Bren so much because I love Bren so much.

*Rob Anderson
A Father's Journey Through Grief
(The Comfort Company)*

<http://www.thecomfortcompany.net/generic27.html>
~reprinted from "Always Loved - Never Forgotten"

Father's Day



Warm and sunny day in June
Father's Day
Children, small and grown
Give gifts to father
Say thanks to father
Say I Love You.

But there are fathers
Whose children are not here
To give gifts and say thanks
And say I Love You.

Remember the fathers
Whose children are gone,
Because they will always be
Fathers at heart.

*~Sascha Wagner
From "Winterson"*





Love Gifts



Were Received From:

*Barbara & Robert Cunningham
Kathleen & Donald Brown*

In Loving Memory of Their
20th Angel Date

Tim Renolds
3/17 - 2/17



Danny Renolds
6/22 - 2/17



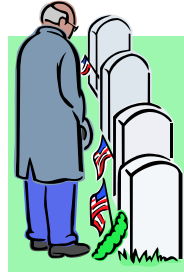
Love Gifts



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!



What Might Have Been

There is a place I go to stand and think
Every Sunday for the past seven years.
I feel sadness as I walk from the car to my spot
It still has the power to bring me to tears.

I stand in the place where one day I will be
Same prayers, same questions, over and over again.
I have one lingering thought every time I'm here.
I've never stopped wondering what might have been.

I think about things I would have done differently
Other things could remain the same.
It saddens me to think that all we have left
Are memories, pictures and a stone that bears his name.

I close my eyes and think about the future
Memories of the past echo through my mind.
I hope he can somehow feel the love
From all of us who were left behind.

There's not a day that goes by that I don't wonder
What a wonderful life this would be.
No more why's, no what if's, no more self pity.
Once again a family of four instead of three.

Somehow we've been able to live with what is.
To know the time will come when we'll meet again.
The dreams buried beneath that stone make me wonder
We'll never know what might have been.

When I'm ready to leave this spot and go back home
I always touch his name carved in that stone.
I know that I will never forget how we cried,
When we stop to remember...the day the music died.

~Tom Murphy
Greater Cincinnati TCF - East Chapter, OH
In Memory of my son, Brennan Murphy

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

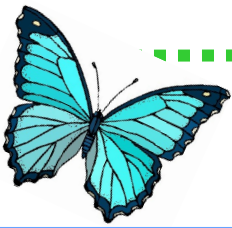


May

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
Selena Cates	5/30	Eric & Elena Cates
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	5/30	John & Joanne Campos

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
Michael Uriarte	6/21	Liza Uriarte



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
Michael Uriarte	6/3	Liza Uriarte
Trisha Douglas	6/29	Jocelyn Smilie-Castro
Selena Cates	6/17	Eric & Elena Cates
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	6/17	John & Joanne Campos



If Tears Could Build A Stairway

If tears could build a stairway
and memories were a lane,
I would walk right up to heaven
to bring you home again,
No farewell words were spoken,
no time to say goodbye,

You were gone before I knew it,
and only God knows why.
My heart still aches in sadness
and secret tears still flow,
What it meant to lose you -
no one will ever know!

~unknown author