



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

November-December 2019

Volume 20, No. 6



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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 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

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 Santa Clarita, CA 91387
 Email: TCF.SCV@gmail.com
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 TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA](http://www.facebook.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA)
 Website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

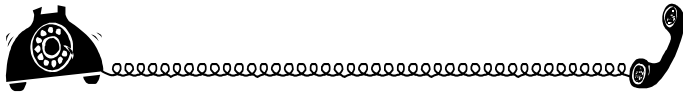
We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month.

Our next 2 meetings will be on **November 7 & December 5.**
Also, please remember our Candle Light Remembrance Program-December 8-see page 3.

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



Wintersong

Season of lights, season of love and peace
 Season of shadow, season of memories
 Season of warmth and joy, season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh again

Give us the vision to hope again

Give us the power to love again

For all our new seasons
 And all our new years.

*~Sascha Wagner
 "Wintersun"*

*Gifts our loved ones have given us
 can't be measured by the years they lived.
 These gifts are measured by the
 love we shared with them.*

~Pat Loder





Shared Thoughts on Thanksgiving

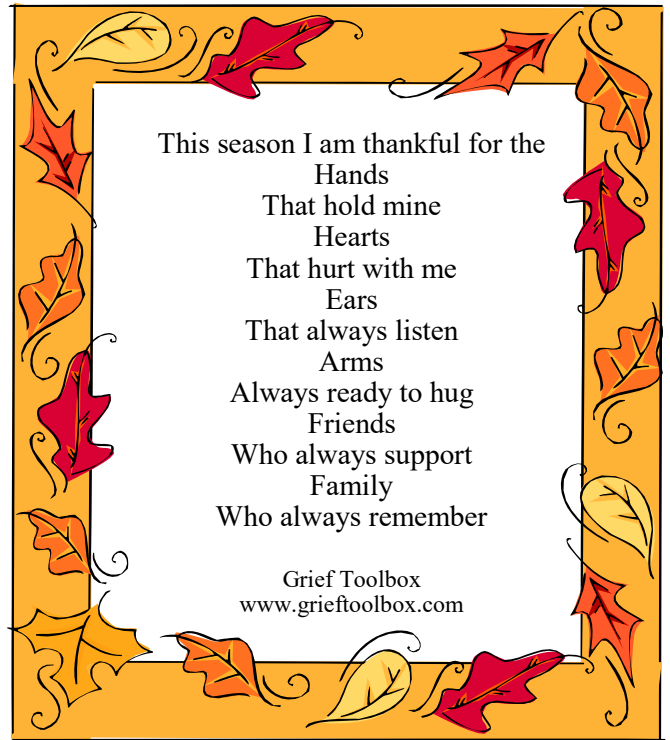
Thanksgiving is the beginning of our holiday season. This once joyous time can become a horrendous anticipation for us. This is the season we like all our children and siblings gathered around us. We enjoy the togetherness, for it is a time to be thankful for each of our family members. We find it difficult for such a large piece to be missing from our family circle.

We suggest you try to discuss your plans with your immediate family, your spouse and children. It not only makes them feel part of the family, but it also removes the tremendous burden of making all the decisions from your shoulders. This also sends the message you know they are hurting; by acknowledging their pain, you open up the door of communication.

You have to decide what is best for your family. You may choose to keep it traditional, or make changes. These changes can be temporary or permanent. It may help to talk about what things you were doing just for the sake of tradition. If they aren't meaningful, and are painful, you may choose to drop them. Some find it helpful to go away; others want to be home. Some have found it very peaceful to devote time to helping others. There are many organizations who need help to serve a meal to others who have no one to spend the holiday with. It is a way of bringing the love for your child or sibling to life. For some, it is impossible to give thanks when your grief is very fresh; this is normal for many. Allow yourself to cry, and grieve, if that is all you are capable of this year. In time you will be able to think beyond your pain; don't feel guilty for something you cannot do. Remember it helps others to feel good, when they can do good, when they can do small physical chores for us; if you are in need of their help, ask for it.

We can't avoid Thanksgiving and sometimes we even feel a little guilty for not being thankful for what we have left. Our overwhelming grief crowds out our appreciation of what we have. We are human, and it is normal to lament our loss. Perhaps this is the season to enumerate, and be thankful, for friends and family who have helped us through these devastating times. We all wanted more time, but we must remember our pain is so very great because we were given someone very special to share a segment of our life with. For this we are thankful. We also are very thankful for all the friends and support we have in The Compassionate Friends. Your sharing with us has got us through many holidays and given us strength and healing from having passed through another painful event. Each passing event tells us we can survive, and doing our grief work softens our pain. We wish you peace of mind and love, as you remember your child, sibling, or grandchild this Thanksgiving.

*~Marie Hofmockel
TCF Valley Forge, PA*



Giving Thanks

I can not hold your hands today,
I can not see your smile.
I can not hear your voices now,
my children, who are gone.

But I recall your faces still,
the songs, the talks, the sighs.
And story times, and winter walks,
and sharing secret things.

I know you helped my mind to live
beyond your time with me.
You gave me clearer eyes to see,
you gave me finer ears to hear,
what living means, what dying means,
my children, who are gone.

So here it is Thanksgiving Day,
and you are not with me.
And while I weep a mother's tears,
I thank you for the gifts you were,
and all the gifts you gave to me,

My children, who are gone.

*~Sasha Wagner
From Wintersun*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

November 7 - Decorate Luminaries

Please join us as we decorate a luminary for our Candle Lighting program (SEE BELOW) The back room will be open for sharing as well.

November 24 - Deadline to send in photo for video presentation for Candle Lighting program.

December 1 - Deadline to send in orders for luminary

December 5 - Holiday Potluck @6:30 (SEE BELOW)

December 8 - Candle Light Remembrance Program

Welcome New Members



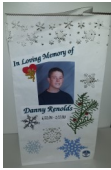
Attending your first meeting takes courage and it is always hard to say "welcome" because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you eligible for our membership in TCF. However, we are glad you found us! We cannot take away your pain but we can offer our friendship and support, Do try and to 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 is:

Eric & Elena Cates, parents of Selena

John & Joanne Campos, grandparents of Selena

Dane & Andria



Luminaries

During our November meeting we will be selling and decorating luminaries in memory of our children, siblings or grandchildren for \$10.00 each as a small fundraiser. All the necessary supplies will be available for you. This is the only fundraiser our chapter has. If you can't make it to this meeting, please send in page 7 of this newsletter (the order form) by **DEC 1** and we'll gladly make one for you. As this is a fundraiser, we would appreciate that you not bring luminaries from home or from past years to our ceremony. These beautiful, lighted luminaries will line the walkway to our Candle Lighting Remembrance Program and then they are yours to take home!

Also, please don't forget if your child's picture is not already on our video presentation and you want it to be included, you will need to add it. Please email a digital photo to Alice at TCF.SCV@gmail by **November 24**.

Holiday Potluck Dinner



December 5, 2019
@ 6:30pm

Our December meeting will be our Holiday Potluck Dinner. Please bring your favorite, or maybe your child's favorite dish to share with our group. **Paper goods, dessert and drinks will be provided.** Our meeting will begin at **6:30 instead of 7:00** for this special dinner meeting only. The holidays are extremely difficult, come spend some time with your Compassionate Friends!



19th Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

December 8 @ 6:30PM

We hope to see all of you at our Candle Lighting Remembrance Program on Sunday, December 8 beginning at **6:30PM** at La Mesa Jr. High School, 26623 May Way, Santa Clarita, 91351.

This very touching evening includes music, featured, performers, video presentation, the reading of poems, and the lighting of candles (battery operated) which will be provided to all who attend.

We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. This candle lighting ceremony is a symbolic way of showing the love we continue to carry for our children, even though they are no longer with us physically.

Please invite your friends, neighbors, and family to come and share with you this very moving celebration of all children who have died. If you can't be with us, be sure to light a candle at home so that...

"their light may always shine"

By the way, we are looking for volunteers to help clean up after the ceremony. Let us know if you would be willing to help, Thanks!



Ghosts of Christmas Past

In anticipation of my first Christmas morning, Mamma posed me, freshly scrubbed and curled, before the Christmas tree for my annual holiday photograph. This was the beginning of a lifetime of Christmas celebrations—each one steeped in rituals and traditions built upon those which had gone before. As a child, I delighted in the magical world created in the minds of the very young. We woke to sparkle and glitter, presents stacked high, and bulging stockings. As I grew, the magic of childhood gave way to a different reality and a different joy, but the rituals remained largely un-changed.

Marriage bought family and babies of my own. The photo albums grew and expanded as I made a career of the holidays and the memories they held. Year after year, I lined up the little ones in front of the tree—just as my mother had done before me. Each holiday celebration was an extension of former joys, other times, different places. Importance was placed on building bridges from the past into the present.

Constancy equals comfort and security. Psychologists agree that tradition is important to the development of society and to family structure. Family traditions are healthy and normal. There's only one thing wrong with tradition—it's filled with shoulds. "We should have the tree up before the 15th. We should entertain. We should shop...decorate...send cards. We should be happy..." Tradition creates purpose and connection. Tradition provides roots. But tradition magnifies the pain of our loss.

At our house, we trim the tree the first weekend in December. It's tradition. But the year Alexander died, I didn't feel like trimming the tree at all. When we did do it, as many changes as possible were made in the ritual to help me tolerate the empty space left in his absence. The children receive a new Christmas ornament each year to add to their collections. Someday these ornaments will adorn their own Christmas trees in their own homes. But what about Alex's set? Those tree ornaments will never bloom into twenty and will never follow him into adulthood. That first year after Alex's death I bought him one anyway—an angel in flight. Four stockings hang from the mantel. Do I hang Alexander's stocking, or do I put it away forever? The first year, I hung his apart from the others. But every year since, his stocking has hung with the other four. I have five children with five stockings—I always will.

The key to surviving Christmas as a bereaved individual is flexibility and foresight. It's important to plan ahead, and it's important to anticipate the changes you will need to make. Habit is easy, and it does take a little more effort to implement creative change in holiday planning. But change and adjustment are essential for the newly bereaved.

Families can spend so many years following the same patterns and routines that they forget these choices were made because they were right for their moment. But choices made under different circumstances may not be the right choices for the newly bereaved. The early moments of grief demand new rules. Even customs "set in stone" can be bent. Festivities that

expend more energy than we have to give can be skipped. Entertaining and socializing can be altered or curtailed altogether. Decisions can be delayed and new plans designed and implemented at the last minute. The bereaved can learn to be creative and flexible in customizing their holiday plans. Traditions bind families and societies tightly to one another. But altering our traditions to suit our current needs makes sense. Each moment, each stage of life, demands its own customs and its own rituals. By building our bridges moment to moment, we link the past and present to the future.

~Joaneta Hendel

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Blessings and Burdens

As our feelings of loss and pain mingle with celebration, our memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles. When memories of winter's past come to mind, many of us can find a light behind the tears. Images and sounds that are stored inside emerge in our mind with familiar clarity and evergreen tenderness.

But there are those among us who have no holiday memories because their infants did not live long enough to see their first season of lights. These grievers have few memories to give them solace today, and we can only tell them that we are deeply aware of this special part of their grief.

~Sascha Wagner,
From *Wintersun*

Dimming Lights



For most, Chanukah is a joyous time with dreidels, gifts and lights.

We also once had . . .

But since you have died,
my heart is only heavy and sad.

Wherever you are my dearest son,

I pray you are at peace –

Seeing the menorah lights;

Giving me strength to get through
these dim and dark eight days.

Outwardly the Chanukah candles
are glimmering bright – but inside
of me burns only a shimmer of
blurred light.

~Ceil Katz,

TCF, So Hampton Chapter



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Barbara Rawson

In Loving Memory of her Son:

**Christopher
Rodriguez**

9/22 - 6/13

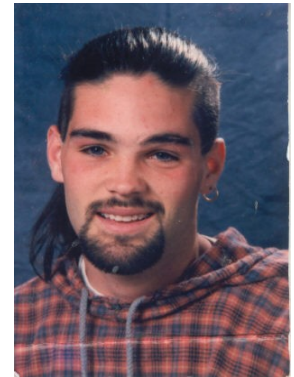


Jim & Susan Kirk

In Loving Memory of their Children:

**Justin
Knopf**

11/28 - 11/21



&

**Jamie
Knopf**

10/21 - 11/21

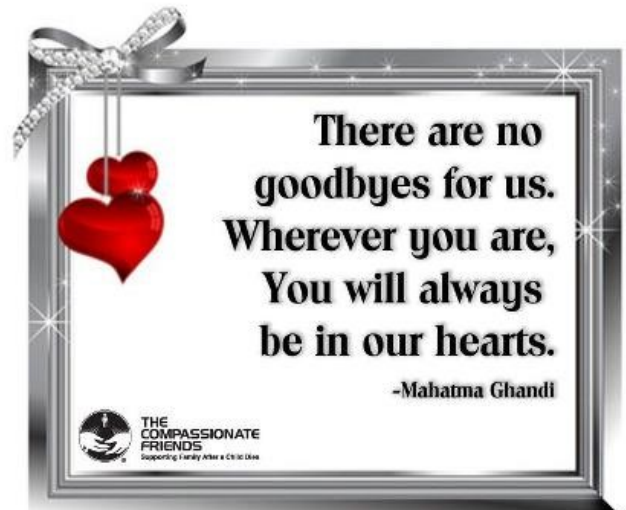


Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer

In Loving Memory of their Son:

**Eric
Spencer**

12/29 - 11/2



"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays



November

Name	Date	Member
Justin Knopf	11/28	Jim & Susan Kirk
Michael Kelly	11/17	Kathy Kelly
Justin Hakola	11/9	Cheryl Landreth
Aurora Boehlert-Rubinfeld	11/16	Aaron & April Boehlert Rubinfeld

December

Name	Date	Member
Joshua Sparage	12/24	Bonnie & Gary Sparage
Eric Spencer	12/29	Bobbie Mathers
Sarah Carter	12/27	Shelly Carter
Casey Ray	12/5	Tracey Ray
Michael Leone	12/6	Mariacristina Leone
Erica Findley	12/15	Kevin & Pam Findley



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

November

Name	Date	Member
Darren Bullock	11/19	Carol Lock
Eric Spencer	11/2	Bobbie Mathers
Justin Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk
Jamie Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk
Francisco Garcia	11/9	Veroncia Garcia
Melissa Mueller Matters	11/3	Kirk & Dianne Mueller
Colleen Brown	11/3	Keith & Lin Brown
Taylor Brand	11/7	Bret & Teresa Brand

December

Name	Date	Member
Anthony Amodio	12/26	Michael Olds
William Lemke, Jr.	12/18	Marilyn Lemke
Whitney Moore	12/12	Beth Moore
Jeremy Silverstein	12/16	Mel & Jeniffer
Jacob Kaplan	12/24	Michael & Robyn
Jaycie Stewart	12/15	Jason Stewart

A Death Has Occurred

A death has occurred, and everything is changed by this event. We are painfully aware that life can never be the same, that yesterday is over, that relationships once rich have ended. But here is another way to look upon this truth. If life went on the same without the presence of the one who died, we could only conclude that the life we here remember made no contribution, filled no place, meant nothing. The fact that this person left behind a place that cannot be filled is a high tribute to this individual. Life can be the same after a trinket has been lost, but never the same after the loss of a treasure.

~Paul Iron
TCF Savannah, GA

Live through the hurt...so that joy can return to
warm your heart!

This is the season of light, for it is the season when
we remember that once we loved and were loved,
And that is the *greatest light and memory of all!*



~Darcie Sims



The Compassionate Friends
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all children who have died

Worldwide Candle Lighting®

... that their light may always shine.

**Sunday, December 8, 2019
7 PM Around the Globe**



*Candlelight Remembrance Program
December 8, 2019 6:30pm
Photo Presentation & Luminaries*

*La Mesa Jr. High School
26623 May Way
Santa Clarita, CA 91351*

*Sponsored by The Compassionate Friends
Of Santa Clarita*

Again this year we will have a video presentation of our children's, sibling's, and grandchildren's photos. You do not have to be a member of the Santa Clarita Chapter to have their photo included in this presentation. Photos must be received by **November 24** to be included in the video. A digital photo is preferred and should be emailed to our chapter at TCF.SCV@gmail.com. If you only have a hard copy of your photo, it can be mailed to Alice Renolds at 27949 Park Meadow Dr., Canyon Country, CA 91387. Please include your name, loved one's name, address, and phone number so your photo can be returned to you.

Also available for purchase are luminaries in memory of your child/sibling/grandchild as a small fundraiser for \$10.00. If you are unable to make our November meeting to come and decorate one, please fill out and mail in the order form below. We will take care of the rest for you and put it out on the walkway the night of the program! These luminaries are yours to take home at the end of the program. As this is a fundraiser, we would appreciate that you **not bring your own** luminary or **ones from past** years to our program.

The deadline for ordering a luminary is **December 1.**

# _____ of Luminaries with battery operated candle (\$10.00 each)	Total \$
Name(s) to appear on Luminary (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)	

Please mail order form and check (**made out to The Compassionate Friends**) to:
Alice Renolds
27949 Park Meadow Dr.
Canyon Country, CA 91387

Orders must be received by December 1, 2019