



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

November-December 2020

Volume 21, 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 re-creation and beauty.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

P.O. Box 700
 Jensen Beach, FL 34957
 Toll Free (877) 969-0010 *Fax (630) 990-0246
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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:

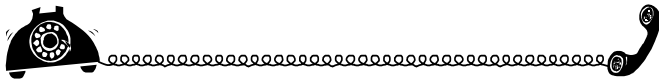
- November 5, 2020-ZOOM Meeting**
 - December 3, 2020-ZOOM Meeting**
 - December 13-Candle Lighting Program-**
- See page 3 for info**

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 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)

What We Remember Is The Gift



For many, this season brings a quiet sadness of heart knowing that many we love are no longer with us. They are no longer at our table during family dinners. We miss their voice and sharing special times with them – especially during the holidays. When we stop to think about what we’re missing by their absence, think about those memories in a different light – perhaps think of them as gifts that endure through time as we continue our journey. How many times have you been comforted by a song that reminds you of someone? You stop and reflect, even if only for a moment, on a time that was special. What a memory. What a nice feeling that was. In that moment, you once again have the gift of that loved one’s presence within your heart. For the moment. How wonderful. Memories will never replace the loss of a loved one being near and close at hand, but they can live on in our spirits, through our feelings and in those quiet moments that are just ours – private and peaceful and yes, even comforting. Memories. They are powerful. Enchanting. Loving. And important. Memories are the very fabric of our being. They are the treasures each of us hold within our hearts and spirits. And they are truly a gift. Cherish these gifts. Let them lift your spirit and bring a calming joy to your life, every day.

*From an Olinger/Crown Hill Publication
 Submitted by Barbara Stoddart,
 in loving memory of Jim and Dave Cash
 Lovingly Lifted from
 TCF Front Range, February Newsletter*

*The gift you give, the love you feel,
 the memory you cherish...
 These are the things by which your
 life endures and shines.*

~Sascha Wagner



Three Years Later... There is Much for Which I am Thankful

As thanksgiving approaches my thoughts naturally return to Thanksgiving Day of 1978. Bob and I were at the lowest point in our lives. It was just three days after Blake had been killed and we were marking time before the memorial service that was scheduled to take place the next day. I don't remember much about that day but I do recall that as our extended family gathered around the table to share the feast that my mother had lovingly prepared, I knew that I could not offer thanks for anything. I wasn't even thankful for being alive. How could I be when we had just lost something more precious than life itself?

Now, three years later, there is much for which I am thankful: An understanding and patient husband, two surviving sons and a lovely daughter-in-law who has worked hard these years to rebuild our shattered family into the happy and loving one that it is today. I am thankful for Compassionate Friends who gave us hope and role models to continue the task of rebuilding our lives when falling apart seemed easier; and the knowledge that we may be able to now extend a helping hand to someone who just has begun the terrible grief journey.

But most of all I am thankful for the 19 years that we had Blake with us. Life with Blake ranged from loving communication to teenage withdrawal and everything in between.

I wouldn't change one minute of any of it. As a matter of fact, three years' perspective has give me the ability to laugh at some of the things he did that sure didn't seem funny at the time. Now that a lot of the pain has moved out of my heart, there is more room for Blake to reside there.

My message to those of you who are facing your first Thanksgiving since your child died is—don't feel guilty if you can find absolutely nothing for which to be thankful. Be very patient with yourself and face these trying days one at a time. I promise you that you really will reach a day when you will be able to offer thanks once again.

*~Marge Frankenberg
TCF Arlington Heights, IL*



Giving Of Myself

The other day I sat alone and realized my heart was not as heavy. Oh, there are still times when I miss my child desperately, but I seem to rebound sooner now. Then the phone rang, and another mother called to lean on me. She must have know I was ready.

I listened, she shared, and oh! How I felt for her. When we said goodbye, I sat again, but not as alone this time. New strength and pride came in knowing I had lent a helping hand. My child's death had taught me so much new.

~Author Unknown



Remembered With Thanks

I watched everyone celebrate
with music and laughter,
their cornucopias full with
the feast of plenty.

I trudged to the table
my meager offerings a broken heart
tear-drenched cheeks
a longing so deep.

As I lit a candle
shared memories of you,
the flame warmed my heart
and I knew you are still with me.

*~Alice Wisler
From Tributes*

The Colors



As the leaves are quickly changing colors,
my heart seems to be saddened,
yet overwhelmed at the miracle of Mother
Nature.

There's so many different colors,
they seem to hold some hidden knowledge and
purpose far beyond our understanding.
I can't imagine how many countless numbers of
brown leaves there are,
then again there's a lot of red leaves that all hold
different shapes and colors.

To top it off the blended in shades of yellows puts
the trees at a beautiful nature of art.

When all the colors fade and go away,
A tear always comes down my face.
The cold long winter of trees that usually
withstands all climates.

But I long for the new buds in the spring that
begin the colors again.

I'm one of the many mothers whose heart
changes with the colors.

*~Linda Witt
TCF, Lakes Area, MI*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

Nov. 5 – ZOOM Meeting
Dec. 3 – ZOOM Meeting
Dec. 13– Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

Zoom Meetings

Unfortunately due to the on going Corona Virus restrictions we will be continuing our meetings virtually. We hope that you will decide to join us for the Nov 5 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.



Luminaries

Unfortunately, we do not have in person meetings where we can gather to decorate luminaries. However, we still wanted to offer them to you for our Candle Lighting program. They will be available for purchase in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling for the price of **\$5.00** to cover the cost. However, this year we will make them for you with your loved one's name and the candle will still be included.

The luminaries will look absolutely beautiful this year outside lining the way to our ceremony. Remember, they are yours to take home after the program. Please consider ordering one! The order form is the last page of this newsletter and the deadline to order one is **DEC 7**.



Thank you so very much for your generous Newsletter Renewal Donations, they are greatly appreciated!

Mona Gonzalez in memory of her daughter, Cyrena
Cindy Tiekenski in memory of her daughter Melissa
Apologies for a spelling error in last month's newsletter!!!
It should have been:
Mel & Jennifer **Silverstein** in memory of their son Jeremy



*20th Annual
Candle Lighting
Remembrance Program
December 13 @ 6:30PM*

We are proud to say that this is our 20th annual candle lighting ceremony for our chapter. Because of these trying times and the added stress to our grief we felt that our members needed this very important time to remember their loved ones. However, this year because of the pandemic it is going to be a little different!!! The program will be **held outdoors** with **plenty of room for social distancing** at a **private ranch** owned by one of our members, Carlos & Ana Rodriguez. If the weather does turn bad, the ceremony can be moved indoors to a large 3 sided steel building. All members **must wear masks, bring their own chairs** and **sit at least six feet apart**. We are asking that please **only members** of our chapter and **their family** members attend.

The address of the ranch where the program will take place is: 31514 San Martinez Rd., Castaic.
Directions: Take the 126 Hwy, Right on Chiquita Cyn, Rd. continue for about 2 miles, Left on San Martinez Rd., follow it to the very end.

As in past programs, this very touching evening will include music, a video presentation, the reading of poems, and the lighting of candles (battery operated) which will be provided to all who attend, we just won't have live musical performers.

We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling and with the pandemic there is the added stress and anxiety. 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 come and share with us this very moving celebration of all children who have died. If you don't feel comfortable coming, we understand! Please stay at home and be sure to light a candle so that...

"their light may always shine"

"The lasting gift that any loved one gives us is their presence in our hearts. It is up to us to dedicate ourselves to integrating that loving spirit into our ongoing lives."

*~Carol Staudacher
Lovingly lifted from
TCF South Bay/LA July 2018*



The Holidays Are Coming!

"The Holidays are coming! The Holidays are coming!" Most bereaved parents make that observation with the same sense of fear and dread that Chicken Little had when he announced, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" We view Christmas or Hanukkah differently than the rest of the world. In our minds they become great trials to be endured. In my opinion, this trial is tougher than birthdays or death anniversaries. This is the time when love abounds. The family (and extended family) all gather together, coming from near and far, to share in this love. The only trouble with this happy scene is that our child is missing. He or she has traveled too far from us to come for the holidays! We can't buy gifts for a photograph or hug and kiss a memory. The emptiness that this creates in us cannot be filled, no matter how many relatives gather by our hearth. To add to the pain, most well-meaning friends and relatives feel that the best way to handle the problem is to pretend that it doesn't exist. They never mention the one person that is on the minds and in the hearts of everyone. We found out early on that it is not possible to keep the "presence" of our child out of a family gathering. Trying to do so makes everyone uncomfortable and causes us as parents to feel disloyal.

The first Christmas after our son died, we did it "their" way. Never again! Now we make sure that he is very much a part of our holiday. For starters, we decided once again to hang all three stockings. We don't fill them, but just seeing them all hanging together is right for us. The tree was very important to Blake. Every year he took the responsibility of stringing the lights for us. Now it is important to us to see that Blake has a tree. We have a very special one, about 3 feet tall, that we weight heavily at the bottom. We decorate it with weather-proof ornaments and place it at his grave. We leave the tree there until spring so it can make the gravesite when the snows are deep. We also have a lovely candle that we burn on special days. This is our way of including our missing son in the family circle. But most important, we talk about him. We don't do it obsessively, but we don't hesitate to recall memories of him as often as we recall those of other children in the family. Because we talk of him in an easy and natural manner, the rest of the family has taken our cue. They now bring up his name naturally. It is all so much more comfortable than the way we tried to handle it that first year.

Another couple in our chapter had a wonderful idea for the first holiday after their daughter died. Their greatest fear was that no one would mention her, so they compiled an album of her pictures and casually left it out on the coffee table. It wasn't long before people were looking through it, recalling favorite memories of her, and the ice was broken.

There must be so many other ways that you can make your child a part of your holiday — ways that seem right and comfortable for you. You may choose to keep your thoughts private rather than share them with others. But the most important thing to remember is that the choice is yours. Do what makes you comfortable, not what others think should make you comfortable. If you follow the dictates of your heart and what gives you comfort, those around you will see that it also and follow your lead.

~Marge Frankenberg
TCF, Arlington Heights IL

Have you Decorated Your Tree?



My tree is clothed in dark and light
And I set before it in the night,
Remembering how, with loving care,
A child once hung those trinkets there.
And though the tree seems fully dressed,
Alone, I now must hand the rest
Then the tree with greater love will shine
With memories of that son of mine.
I hang the sparkle from his eyes
That shone each day with sweet surprise,
I hang a gentle heart-shaped kiss
And a glowing ball of childlike bliss.
I hang a bow of loving charms,
And a hug he once held in his arms
Now every light will hold a part
Of all the memories in my heart.
For though my grief will never sleep,
His heart would break and he would weep
If we never again felt the Christmas joy
That was so much a part of my angel boy.

Lynette Siler,
TCF Troy, MI



How I Found Hope...

My youngest child David Michael died at 21 January 2000. A tragic mistake was made and in an instant David was gone. And our family, as we knew, was changed forever. I experienced such horrific pain that I thought I would never be whole again. My heart was broken. The Compassionate Friends became a lifeline for me. And I saw hope when newly bereaved parents walked through the door. I've seen many heartbroken bereaved parents paralyzed by grief smile again, laugh again, and live with joy again.

I found hope in celebrating Chanukah, the miracle of lights. I celebrate the miracle of David's birth and the light and love he brought into our lives. In December, we celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanza and the Winter Solstice. These holidays are celebrated with lights and candles, why, because the winter is the season of darkness. These holidays remind of us that darkness must yield to light, spring follows winter and we remember the light our children brought into our lives—the light of their laughter and light of their love.

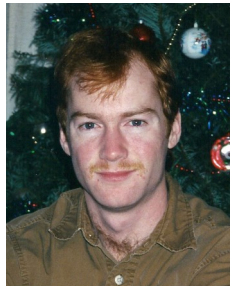
~Lois Copeland, David's Mom
Chapter Leader of TCF, Arlington, VA

A Love Gift

Was Received From:

Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer
In Loving Memory of their son:

Eric Spencer
12/29 - 11/2



Love Gifts

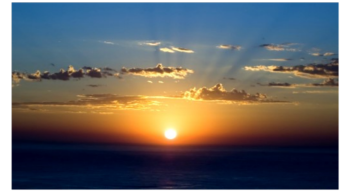


A Love Gift is a wonderful way to remember your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday or angel dates or just to say I love you. What better way than to have their photo included in our newsletter along with a special memory, thought or message, article or poem from you.

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 upcoming 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!

The Visit



In the early hours of this new day
Just as light creeps around the edges of morning
I await your visit.

Sometimes you come softly
Other times, it is as if you come with cymbals crashing!

But, faithfully, relentlessly, you come.
I eagerly await your arrival, all the while dreading it.
For, the reality is that here, in the quiet of my memory,
Here is the only place you and I can be "together".

I flip through memories, searching for the one we will share.

Some make me laugh,
Most make me cry.
It doesn't really matter which memory is chosen.

Your first shaky legs...
You dashing out the door on your way to the beach...
You in the midst of your messy room...
You in the midst of my life, our lives...
Each memory brings smiles, but mostly tears
And pain...intense pain
Binding up my heart to the point of strangling.

But, I will not forego this pain
It is there underscoring the love—
The passionate feeling I will carry for you,
forever in my heart.
Such intense pain, such immense love.
I'll see you tomorrow...

~Susan Howard
TCF San Diego, CA

*Know for certain that we never lose the people
we love, even to death.*

*They continue to participate in every act,
thought and decision we make.*

*Their love leaves an indelible
imprint in our memories.*

*We find comfort in knowing that our
lives have been enriched by
having shared their love.*

~Leo Buscaglia
TCF, We Need Not Walk Alone
Autumn/Winter 2019

“Forever In Our Hearts”

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Happy Birthday



Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

November

December

Name	Date	Member		Name	Date	Member
Justin Knopf	11/28	Jim & Susan Kirk		Joshua Sparage	12/24	Bonnie & Gary Sparage
Michael Kelly	11/17	Kathy Kelly		Eric Spencer	12/29	Bobbie Mathers
Justin Hakola	11/9	Cheryl Landreth		Sarah Carter	12/27	Shelly Carter
Aurora Boehlert-Rubinfeld	11/16	Aaron & April Boehlert Rubinfeld		Michael Leone	12/6	Mariacristina Leone
				Erica Findley	12/15	Kevin & Pam Findley



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

November

December

Name	Date	Member		Name	Date	Member
Darren Bullock	11/19	Carol Lock		William Lemke, Jr.	12/18	Marilyn Lemke
Eric Spencer	11/2	Bobbie Mathers		Whitney Moore	12/12	Beth Moore
Justin Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk		Jeremy Silverstein	12/16	Mel & Jeniffer
Jamie Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk		Jacob Kaplan	12/24	Michael & Robyn
Melissa Mueller Matters	11/3	Kirk & Dianne Mueller		Kevin Rickhoff	12/09	Nancy Rickhoff
Colleen Brown	11/3	Keith & Lin Brown				

A Flicker In The Distance

In this time of grief,
When the darkness is so great,
And your heart is aching so,
You feel that it may break.

Remember that in this darkness
There is a candle's light
A flicker in the distance
Small but intensely bright.

That tiny little glow
That seems so far away
Will glow brighter and brighter
With each passing day.



Time does not heal, as they say,
But it tends to numb
The ache we feel inside our heart
When that darkness comes.

In time your heart will feel lighter
And the memories won't bring such pain
The tears won't flow as often
And you will find laughter again.

So keep your eye on that distant glow
To see how far you came...
Because at the end of the darkness
That flicker becomes a flame.

*Jacquelyn M. Comeaux,
Copyright 1999, Reprinted by permission of Author*

The Compassionate Friends

Light a candle for all
children who have died

Worldwide Candle Lighting

...that their light may always shine.

Sunday, December 13, 2020
6:30 PM



Candlelight Remembrance Program

December 13, 2020 6:30pm

Photo Presentation & Luminaries

Rodriguez Ranch

31514 San Martinez Rd

Castaic, 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. If your loved one is already on the video, you do not need to submit a new photo. All 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 our2angels@twc.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 for \$5.00. This year they will only include their name and the candle. 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. The deadline for ordering a luminary is **December 1**.

# _____ of Luminaries with battery operated candle (\$5.00 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, 2020**