



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

September-October 2020

Volume 22, No. 5



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.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

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MEETINGS

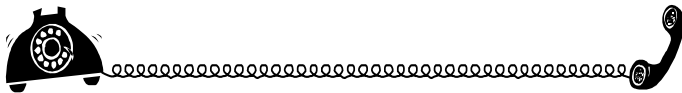
We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next two meetings are:

Sept. 3, 2020-ZOOM MEETING
October, 1, 2020-ZOOM MEETING
See page 3 for info

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



*Gently, Softly, Slowly,
 With Love.*

Tears stream down my face. I repeat my mantra.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I give myself permission to grieve.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I yearn. I search. I cling. My heart breaks.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I wail. I scream. I worry. I despair.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I listen. I read. I write. I pray. Not often, I talk.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I remember. Your face. Your eyes. Your smile. Your
 love.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I feel your presence next to me. I reach out my hand.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I learn to care for myself, as I once cared for you.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I face one more day.
Gently. Softly. Slowly, With Love.

*~Debbie Ortega
 For her daughter Angela Marsh
 The Compassionate Friends
 "We Need Not Walk Alone" Magazine, Spring 2008*



Tidal Waves and Tsunamis

In 52 years, I've never seen a Tidal Wave or Tsunami. But they have become a part of everyday life. For these particular storms, there is no warning, no time for preparation, no chance of evacuation or no shelter.

The storms began on a picture perfect late summer day in Michigan when our only son, Robby, died in a horrific boating accident. He was just 15.

The Tidal Wave variety sneaks up quickly. They come from nowhere. They strike without warning, hit hard and knock me to my knees. Then they recede about as swiftly as they arrive. I'm left battered, awestruck, dazed and confused. From these, I can recover and get back on my feet without prolonged agony - mind over matter.

Tsunamis also strike with little warning. Sometimes roue waves rush through me first, like little warning shots over the bow. The buildup can take mere minutes, hours or days, but the results are always the same. My Tsunami's are fierce and intense. They sweep me off my feet and leave me completely defenseless as the water continues to rise higher and higher, and every breath feels like it could be the last. With Tsunamis, I have no choice but to ride it out, and wait and wait and wait...until the water finally recedes and I'm left in a puddle of pure exhaustion. Tsunamis require the endurance of a marathon runner and the patience of a Saint. Eventually, they do subside. But recover is definitely slower.

Tidal Waves and Tsunamis are a phenomenon our entire family experiences. Sometimes they hit each of us at the same time, even if we are in different places.

Shelter in the arms of others who have experience your grief and sorrow can provide temporary relief. Sometimes it is enough. But sometimes it is nothing more than a grass hut that gets washed away.

Thankfully, after seven years, the storms are finally letting up. The skies are clearing. At times, the stars even shine through the darkness.

In my lifetime, I doubt that I will see a real Tidal Wave or Tsunami, but you don't have to see them to experience them.

~Susan Jerovsek
The Compassionate Friends
We Not Walk Alone, Autumn/Winter 2016



September Monarchs

Time between summer and winter
 Time under changing skies -
 muted and heavy with foresight,
 or endless blue, smiling at butterflies.

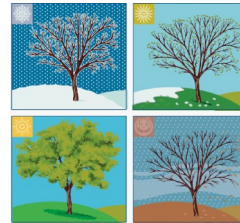
Time between summer and winter.
 Time between laughter and tear -
 harvest of beauty remembered
 and voices (where are you?) to hear.



Time between summer and winter,
 thoughtful and painful and wise -
 muted and heavy with losing
 but smiling at butterflies.



~Sascha Wagner
From the book: "For You From Sascha"



Seasons

The change of seasons is difficult. It reminds me that I must change if I am to live again.

We can become stuck in our grief, full of self-pity and overwhelmed with pain. I do not believe our children would want us to live the rest of our lives in pain and misery. It is so easy to fall into the "black pit" and never have the strength or courage to crawl out—because crawl out we must...on our bellies.

We are different now, with different priorities and goals. We must find a new purpose for going on, and we must accept the changes in our lives—including ourselves, for we are different now.

We cannot go backward, though there are times we yearn to. We must move forward. If we don't, we stay stuck at the point that our world changed. I used to say "ended."

Change is difficult. To accept the loss of our child is the most difficult of all. Our comfort comes from believing that the love we share will go on for all eternity and that we will be reunited again—and each day brings us closer. We must learn to live again, love again, feel joy and peace again—or our survival will be without value to ourselves or others.

~Renee Little
TCF Fort Collins, CO

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

Sept. 3 – ZOOM MEETING

Oct. 1 – ZOOM MEETING

Zoom Meetings

We had our first Zoom Meeting last month and had about 18 members join together virtually. All agreed it was very worth while and very much needed! We have decided this is the best way to have our meetings for now. We hope that you will be able to join us for the Sept. 3 Zoom meeting. 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,

Please know that TCF is here for you even though we are unable to have our monthly meetings. 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. 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.



The Keepers of Memories

You make friends because you have things in common.
We are friends because of our children.
The older ones, the younger ones,
the ones who never even had a chance to breathe.
They are our reason for being.
Our heartbeat, our life's blood.
Whether we have lots of memories or only a few,
we are joined by an unbreakable bond.
We are the ones left behind, to remember
and carry the torch for those we remember so lovingly.
We are there for ourselves and each other.
Because we understand the pain of loss.
We must also be there for those
who unfortunately join our ranks.
Because we are the parents of lost children,
the bruised hearts,
the keepers of memories.

~Cheryl Pelletier
TCF Concord, NH

Posted 10/19/2018 TCF E-Newsletter



IMPORTANT!!! Newsletter Renewal

The deadline to send in your newsletter renewal form is **August 31!** If you did not send it in, this newsletter will be **your last one** and you will no longer receive our chapter's note cards on your child's birthday and Angel date. If you no longer wish to receive it, we hope it has brought some comfort. Thank you to all our members who have already returned the form in. Please call or email Diane or Alice if you have any questions.



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

Ida Hahlbech in memory of her son Vincent
Richard & Carol Costin in memory of their son Jeffrey
Robert & Juanita Arvizu in memory of their son Michael
Bert & Diane Briones in memory of their daughter Michelle
Patricia Patton, Ph.D. in memory of all SCV children
Carlos & Ana Rodriguez in memory of their son Eric
Cheryl Petersen in memory of her son Kevin
Bruce Peddie in memory of his son Nigel
Eric & Elena Cates in memory of their daughter Selena
Marie Sprague in memory of her son Steven
Marilyn Lemke in memory of her William
Fran McPhie in memory of her son Sean
Steve & Jeanne Crittenden in memory of their daughter Sarah
Nancy Rickhoff in memory of her son Kevin
John & Joanne Campos in memory of their grandchild Selena
Mel & Jennifer Silverstien in memory of their son Jeremy
Elaine McAlpine in memory of her son Daniel



Balloon Release-Canceled

We are very sorry and disappointed to inform you that our Family Picnic/Balloon Release has been canceled this year due to the Covid 19 restrictions. Hopefully, we will continue our tradition and will be able to have one next year! Thank you for your understanding.

*By love they are remembered.
and in memory they live.*

~unknown



MUSINGS ON HALLOWEEN, PAST AND PRESENT

As I type this, the nip in the October air is a reminder that the major holidays are just around the corner.

Halloween paraphernalia has been in the stores since July with Christmas decorations right behind them. For those of us who are bereaved parents, this means the sooner the décor is on the store shelves, the longer we have the constant reminders that we will be facing the holidays without our child present. Whether this is your first Halloween following their death or years down the road, such as in my situation, the holiday season stirs the emotions. For example, with Halloween, there could be the sorrow of no longer having to find that perfect costume or witnessing the delight in your child's eyes as they head out the door to trick-or-treat. If your child was an adult when they died, perhaps it is your old memories of Halloweens when they were youngsters. And there are those whose children died before they ever had the opportunity to create memories, the sadness that they were never able to experience even one holiday with that child.

Halloween can be particularly hard to get through. In the past, I always thought of it as innocuous enough; costume parties, children excitedly dashing door-to-door looking for treats, pumpkin carving, and the occasional harmless prank. However, after my daughter Nina died, I became acutely aware of things that I had never given a second thought. For instance, my neighbor made their whole front yard into a graveyard scene of fake headstones with scary or silly epitaphs on them, and terrifying creatures coming out of the earth. Before Nina died, I also found cemeteries "creepy", but now look at them differently, even with a sort of reverence. I no longer have a problem going out to my daughter's grave-site, even in the middle of the night. I find the solitude of the historic countryside graveyard where she lays peaceful, dignified and worthy of respect. I was hurt by what I felt was ridicule and disdain for the final resting place of our loved ones' physical bodies. In addition, some of the masks portrayed faces of death in a way that I found highly offensive, especially since I knew many who lost their children to some of the means depicted. I perceived it as a mockery of the tragedies that these families suffered.

Though I still don't pretend to understand the allure of the above-mentioned Halloween depictions, they aren't as painful to me as they were the first few years after Nina died. Especially in the early grief years, we become hypersensitive to our surroundings and more keenly aware of anything related to death. It is pretty hard to look past the non-bereaved populations seeming nonchalance about something we take so personally. Though we wish there was more understanding, we also know all too well that they cannot truly empathize unless they have walked in our shoes. It is easy to forget that, before our children's deaths, we too may have shown the same indifference. We'd like to think that we would not have been so callous because we now know firsthand how much this hurts

those affected. However, before we lost our "innocence", truth be told, we probably didn't give any of it much thought.

On this 10th Halloween without Nina, I do my best to ignore all the ghoulishness surrounding this time of year. If I do find I am having difficulty, I try very hard to focus on positive memories of Halloween's past, such as her grade-school costume party where our basement became a makeshift haunted house where blindfolded "witches" and "fairy princesses" shrieked and giggled as they plunged their hands into bowls full of peeled grape "eyeballs" and wet macaroni "brains". Or the photos I have of her in different costumes over the years, from Care Bear to Punk Rocker. Then there is the photo taken of Nina on her last Halloween. No longer of trick-or-treat age, she stayed home to pass out the candy and carved her own Jack-O-Lantern that she is pictured proudly along side, with her ever-present smile and that wonderful twinkle in her brown eyes; such precious memories...

For those with a missing trick-or-treater this Halloween, the first holidays are the most difficult. Though I find they are easier to bear as time marches on, there will always be the awareness that someone so loved is absent from the family gatherings. Remember that this roller-coaster grief ride brings different feelings with each passing year. It is important to allow those feelings—whatever they may be—and let them happen. Try not to be waylaid by other's expectations of you. Trust your instincts. Truly, only you know what is best for you.

*Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN*

In Memory of my daughter, Nina



October's Memories

October's here, the air is bright
The leaves decked out in fancy dress,
The clouds in shapes of animals
Hang in the sky so blue.
This was our time of year, your favorite.
How many times did you come in,
Cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling,
Smelling of the leaves you jumped through
As a child and even after you grew up.
"Just smell, just feel the air.
I love it, crisp,
With a hint of winter coming."
Our time, but now only my time.
Time to dream dreams that won't be.
Time to wish wishes that can't come true,
Time to remember & treasure each day we had together.
Time for October's memories.

*~Arden Lansing
TCF Northfield, NJ*



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

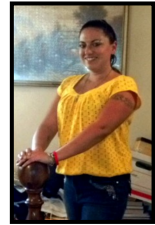
Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer
In Loving Memory of their son:

Peter Spencer
2/5 - 9/4



David & Laurie Millard
In Loving Memory of their daughter:

**Brianna
Millard Smith**
10/6 - 3/30



Bruce Peddie
In Loving Memory of his son:

Nigel Peddie
1/19 - 2/1
Love you Nigel



Carlos & Ana Rodriquez
In Loving Memory of their son:

Eric Rodriguez
8/11 - 1/20



Marilyn Lemke
In Loving Memory of son:

William Lemke
2/12 - 12/18



Eric & Elena Cates
In Loving Memory of their daughter:

Selena Cates
5/30 - 6/17



Patricia Patton, Ph.D.



In Loving Memory
of all the
children in SCV

Steve & Jeanne Crittenden
In Loving Memory of their daughter:

Sarah Crittenden
5/30 - 10/20



"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

September

October

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Vincent Lizarr	9/6	Ida Hahlbech	Jamie Knopf	10/21	Jim & Susan Kirk
Brian Berry	9/16	Steve Berry	Dwaine Laub	10/6	Mary Trimmel
Christopher Rodriguez	9/22	Barbara Rawson	Brianna Millard Smith	10/6	David & Laurie Millard
Francisco Garcia	9/10	Veroncia Garcia	Randal Smith	10/24	Sharon Smith
Eli Rodriguez	9/26	Pahola Mascorro	Aiden Lopez	10/27	Cesar & Jessica
Matthew Weiss	9/21	William Weiss	Aiden Lopez (Grandchild)	10/27	Carmen Smith
Miles Davis	9/01	Michele Davis	Travis Marton	10/15	Andrew & Ricki Marton
			Tommy Sziklay	10/21	Keith & Lise Parcels
			Jake Vachon	10/31	Michelle Vachon



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

September

October

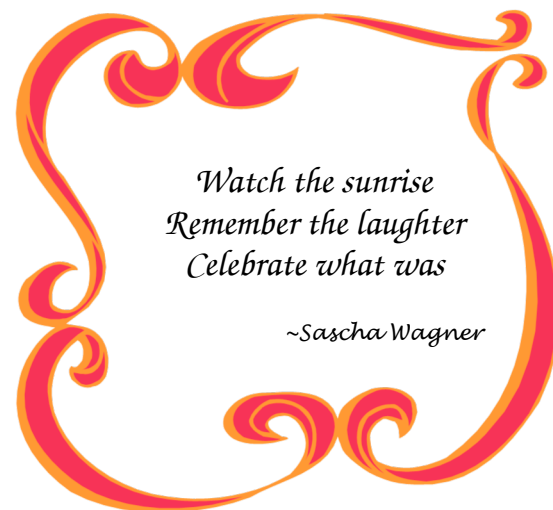
Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Thomas Callin	9/6	John & Rumi Callin	Michelle Briones	10/11	Bert & Diane Briones
Jeffrey Costin	9/3	Richard & Carol Costin	Vincent Lizarr	10/5	Ida Hahlbech
Michael Rodriguez (Sibling)	9/19	Debbie DiCorrado	Adam Bouziane	10/29	Laura Erdmann-Bouziane
Cyrena Becerra	9/5	Mona Gonzalez	Greg Hilton	10/2	Kathy Hilton
Austin Losorelli	9/30	Joe & Phyllis Losorelli	Sage Gallegos	10/17	Alex & Anita Gallegos
Peter Spencer	9/4	Bobbie Mathers	Sarah Crittenden	10/20	Steve & Jeanne Crittenden
Christian Pratt	9/12	Terence & Rakeia Pratt-Smith	Michael Leone	10/5	Mariacristina Leone
Alan Bartfoi	9/9	John & Susan Bartfoi			

Just for a Moment

Just for a moment we held in our hands a gift so precious, so rare.
 Just for a moment we beheld with our eyes her face so lovely, so fair.
 Just for a moment her sensitive touch; just for a moment her lyrical songs;
 Just for a moment she really was here with us, where she belongs.
 Just for a moment we heard with our ears her laughter thrilling the air.
 The echoes are lingering still; they always will.

Now, just for a moment, she lives in our hearts, cherished with tenderest care.
 For as long as we live, for as long as we love, she will always be there.

*~Philip Jones, to every grieving heart.
 TCF-We Need Not Walk Alone, Summer 2005*



*Watch the sunrise
 Remember the laughter
 Celebrate what was*

~Sascha Wagner