



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

September-October

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 reparation 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:

**September 2, 2021**  
**October 7, 2021**

TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING **New Life Assembly of God**

PLACE: **27053 Honby Ave.**

**Canyon Country, CA 91351**

**(Please note) This is our new location for meetings and the meetings are held in the Admin building.**



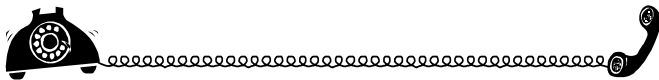
### Summer's End

Always at summer's end  
 there comes that moment  
 memory brings to me  
 gifts from the past.

I see your faces then,  
 glistening in the sun.  
 I hear your laughter then,  
 shared by the wind.

And in that glint of time  
 I feel you near again,  
 as you were, long ago,  
 At summer's end.

*~Sascha Wagner  
 From "Winterson"*



#### 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)

*Sometimes our hearts borrow from  
 our yesterdays.  
 And with each remembrance  
 we meet again those we love.*

*~Flavia*



## School Starts

Strange things happen to you when your child dies. You'll fail if you try to make sense of most of it.

Both my children had finished high school when my son died, yet I found the beginning of school—especially that first year—to be difficult. The bus stops in front of my home for the neighborhood children. Suddenly, as they all gathered to wait for the bus, I found myself reliving those simpler, happier days of old; longing for them actually. It was a painful time.

Now, if I, whose children were grown and gone, had a problem with school starting, those of you who do have school age children must know that your pain is normal. It's another reminder that life goes on—with or without our children—and acknowledging that hurts! I came to the conclusion that it was all right to pine for happier times and it was nothing to get upset about. As with many remnants of grief, I recognize it, allow it and then get on with my life.

Maybe you're like me, you'll always be a little nostalgic about school starting. That would probably have been true even if my son had lived. Maybe you too?

*~Mary Cleckley  
Stone Mountain, Georgia*



### How Soon...

(How soon is Winter!)

Seasons racing by  
With timeless haste -

Spring just a fleeting moment  
- summer gone.

Then autumn hold the heart  
with brief perfection.

How soon is winter.  
And how much remembered  
underneath the snow  
Are songs, and flowers,  
harvest wealth  
and children.



*~Sascha Wagner*



## My "Chris" Birds

It's the twigs below the birdhouse  
Lets me know your birthdays near  
This backyard once sat empty  
Not a bird in sight all year

We placed the houses in our yard  
To give the birds a home  
But never did we see one  
Till the day that you went home

We looked outside on that day  
We laid you in the ground  
On that dark day in September  
The starlings swarmed around

We had never seen so many  
Certainly not in our backyard  
But there they were aplenty  
On that day that was so hard

They came again in the Spring  
Round your birthday, the end of March  
The starlings flew around again  
Bringing twigs, a home to start

So March and in September  
Are special months indeed  
The starlings come to see us  
They recognize our need

Because they came when you left  
They were never here before  
I've named them after you my son  
Your legacy, I'm sure

So, it's these twigs below the birdhouse  
That lets me know that you are near  
My "Chris Birds" come a-calling  
Reminding me of you so dear

*~Robyn Kingery  
In memory of her son, Chris Kingery  
3/79 - 9/97*

# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

### **September 2 – “Sounds of Healing & Emotion”**

Please bring a favorite song to share that reminds you of your child or that has helped you in your journey of grief.

### **October 7 – “Dealing With Anger”**



## Family Picnic/Balloon Release

On August 22 we held our annual Family Picnic/Balloon Release at the Bouquet Canyon Park after skipping last year due to COVID. Our gathering was smaller than usual, I am sure due to the virus. Hopefully next year more of you will be able to join us again. Although our group was small, it was so amazing to see the love and friendship that comes together to honor our children, grandchildren and siblings!

This year was a little different, we each brought our own food and our chapter provided a cake & cookies for dessert. When everyone was done eating we formed a circle to start our brief program in an open area of the park. The poems and songs tugged at our hearts and brought some tears but we knew how important it was to be there, especially because of the past 2 years. As the balloons were released we listened to one final song as the balloons faded beyond our sight into the beautiful blue heavens.

We finished this beautiful day with it's perfect weather enjoying delicious desserts while waiting for our number “hopefully” to be called in the raffle drawing. It was truly a day of honoring and remembering and tears. But we were with Compassionate Friends and family and the tears eventually turned to smiles with the help of hugs!

Thank you for your generous cash donations in our donation basket and the delicious cake provided by John & Joanne Compos, grandparents of Selena Cates. Also, thanks to the Steering Committee for all your help!!

*~Alice Renolds  
Editor & Co-Leader*



## 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:

Juan & Miriam Mai, parents of Loren & Josh

Harry & Marine Zhamkochyan, parents of Natalie



## The Secret of TCF

The secret of The Compassionate Friends is simple: there is no line between helped and being helped. In the early months of peoples’ membership in TCF it seems that most of the time is spent absorbing ideas, crying and letting the grief flow, and “learning the ropes” of being a bereaved parent.

The next step is reaching out to others and helping them. It is not a big step, for listening to another person sort out their life helps us to sort out our life too. But it is an important step because it is the first point at which the movement is reversed. All of the energy had been going inward. We had been feeling so empty inside that we kept withdrawing into ourselves. But the point when we turn around is the point when we first listen to another, speak the words of comfort and hope, share our pain instead of just feeling our pain. At that time the real healing has started.

*~Dennis Klaus, Ph.D.  
TCF St Louis, MO*



## Photo Buttons

Just a reminder! We take orders at each meeting for photo buttons or you can send it by email, or regular mail. We will photo copy your child, grandchild or sibling's picture and make 3” buttons for \$3.00 each.

Why not order an extra button to keep at our meeting place, so you will always have one there. Also, don't forget to order some for you family and friends. Contact Jeanne at 661-478-2948 or joriesgirl56@gmail.com

# My Cover-Up Mask



I wake in the morning with tears in my eyes. I have to face another day without my child. I prepare to go to work and put on my "cover-up mask" as I go out to face the world.

I get my work done and even chat and sometimes smile at my co-workers. And they say, "My, how well she seems to be handling her loss." If they only knew what I am suffering under my "cover-up mask." My work day is over, and I go home and remove my "cover-up mask," and the tears come again.

I go to bed, as the darkness of night envelopes me and sleep eludes me, the tears come again. I have gotten through another day without my child. I have learned I must take one day at a time for the rest of my life, since it will never be the same again.

*~Joan Watson  
TCF Salisbury, MD*



# Halloween Magic

Halloween has always been a special holiday time. I regret that our son only had a one time experience at this magical time of year. I remember as though it were yesterday, the wonder in his face, how he tried to eat the candy through his mask, how he said thank you without coaxing. Then I think of all the parents whose child never had the opportunity and I am grateful for that one time.

It's hard watching all the other children trick-or-treating and yet there is something special about this season that comforts me. As I watch the trees around me, I am reminded that there is a beauty even in their drying leaves. There's a special aroma, a breath-taking color scheme, and if you listen, a rustling in the air. I believe there is a message in fall. I believe God wants us to know that death is like a change of season, that our children now know far more beauty than we can ever imagine. Like the tree that lives on through the barren winter and comes alive again in spring, our children are not gone.

**THEY LIVE!**

*~Nancy Cassell  
TCF, Monmouth, NJ*



# Autumn Feelings

During the next couple of months, we will see many changes taking place in the world around us. The amount of daylight is decreasing; nights are becoming chilly; will often need some sweaters or jackets as we venture forth each day. However the most dramatic change we notice here in New England during September and October is that of the trees trading their green summer outfits for the brilliant reds, oranges and golds of autumn. Many of us who are bereaved parents find ourselves feeling tense and depressed when the earth awakens in the spring; we many also experience these feeling when the dramatic changes of autumn occur. A wise lady once said to me, "our bodies respond to the changing season." She was right. They do! And they respond by FEELING. It seems to me that all of the grief feelings that I have-emptiness, sadness, anger, loneliness, guilt and depression- are all intensified as the world of nature around me changes.

Sometimes, however, we can draw strength from situations that see, on the surface, to be negative. A few weeks after Linda's death, I heard from two friends within a few days of each other. One said. "you know, when I am troubled, I get out and walk until I find something in nature that I've never seen before. I look at it and think about it, and I am renewed." The other friend, who had some physical disabilities, wrote me a note in which she said, "whenever I feel discourage, I find something in nature to study, and I am renewed." I think hearing from these two friends within just a few days of each other had to be more than just a coincidence. I feel that there was an important message there for me, and I've tried to act on it.

I can draw strength from an early morning walk, from frost patterns on our windows, from a raging blizzard, from birds at our feeder, from a rainbow, a ladybug or a whale-If I slow down, think about those things, observe their intricacy and beauty, and attempt to let some of their energy into myself.

We have to slow down, try to realize what is happening to us and be receptive to the energy that is in the natural world for us. When I'm down because it's a sparkling, clear, colorful autumn day and Linda isn't here to experience it with me, I have to feel that pain, then let it go so that the natural beauty and energy around me can strengthen and renew me.

Let yourself experience autumn-the emptiness and aching that you feel. Then try to let go of those feelings, just enough to set the wonder and the beauty of the season into yourself-one day at a time.

*~Evelyn Billings  
TCF Springfield, Mass.*



# Love Gifts

Were Received From:

*Bobbie & Dan Spencer  
In Loving Memory of  
their Son:*

**Peter Spencer**  
2/5 - 9/4



*Memories*  
will bring you  
*love* from the past,  
*courage* in the present,  
*hope* for the future.



 **The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*- Sascha Wagner*



## Remembrance

What do we do when we love someone  
But they have gone away  
When all our days of bright sunlight  
Have turned to shades of gray?

What do we say when no comfort comes  
From words of love and hope  
When efforts made seem pointless  
As we fight each day to cope?

How do we act when we hear their name  
And we cannot help but cry  
This isn't fair, they were barely here  
It's not time to say goodbye!

We promise them that they have made  
A place within our hearts  
Where they will live forever  
Though we are far apart

We call upon the memories  
As time allowed and then  
Tuck them safely in our minds  
To visit now and again

We cherish them as best we can  
Each smile, each word, each look  
We write the story they want told  
On the pages of life's book

For most important is the vow  
We honor when they're gone  
Of sharing all they've given us  
From that moment on

*~Donna Gerrior  
TCF Pasco County, FL  
In Memory of Rob*

*Steve Goodman  
In Loving Memory of his Son:*

**Sean Goodman**  
3/8 - 3/6



*Carlos & Ana Rodriguez  
In Loving Memory of their Son:*

**Eric Rodriguez**  
8/11 - 1/20



# *“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	■	Brianna Millard Smith	10/6	David & Laurie Millard
Christopher Rodriguez	9/22	Barbara Rawson	■	Randal Smith	10/24	Sharon Smith
Matthew Weiss	9/21	William Weiss	■	Aiden Lopez	10/27	Cesar & Jessica
Miles Davis	9/01	Michele Davis	■	Aiden Lopez (Grandchild)	10/27	Carmen Smith
			■	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
Jeffrey Costin	9/3	Richard & Carol Costin	■	Michelle Briones	10/11	Bert & Diane Briones
Michael Rodriguez (Sibling)	9/19	Debbie DiCorrado	■	Vincent Lizarr	10/5	Ida Hahlbech
Cyrena Becerra	9/5	Mona Gonzalez	■	Greg Hilton	10/2	Kathy Hilton
Peter Spencer	9/4	Bobbie Mathers	■	Sage Gallegos	10/17	Alex & Anita Gallegos
Alan Bartfai	9/9	John & Susan Bartfai	■	Sarah Crittenden	10/20	Steve & Jeanne Crittenden
			■	Michael Leone	10/5	Mariacristina Leone



### Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



#### **Yesterday**

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older - when we fought less and talked more.

#### **Today**

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say things face-to-face. So I write them and think them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

#### **Tomorrow**

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

*~Shannon Odessa Stiener  
TCF Lowell, IN*