



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

May-June 2022

Volume 23, 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 re-creation and beauty.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

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 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. The next two meetings are:

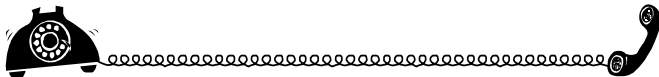
May 5, 2022
June 2, 2022

TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING **Bethlehem SCV**

PLACE: **27265 Luther Dr. Room 5
 Canyon Country, CA 91351**

(Please note) This is our new location for meetings)



**FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISTENER,
 PLEASE CALL:**

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-373-5070
 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 (Button & Angel Board Manager)



About Being Strong

Many people are convinced
 that being strong and brave
 means trying to think
 and talk about "something else."

But we know
 that being strong and brave
 means thinking and talking
 about you dead love,
 until your grief begins to be bearable.

That is strength
 That is courage.
 And only thus can
 "being strong and brave"
 help you to heal.

*~Sascha Wagner
 From the book, "For You From Sascha"*

*"There is sacredness in tears. They are not the
 mark of weakness, but of power.
 They speak more eloquently than
 ten thousand tongues.
 They are the message of
 overwhelming grief, of deep contrition,
 and of unspeakable love."*

~Washington Irving



Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, Mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past.....gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the fifth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself.... "borrowing trouble" as my dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued.

The choice to embrace or ignore Mother's Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow." Some of us weep; some of us work. Some of us read, some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our own truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-of-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

*~Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX*



A Mother's Lament

If I had known
The pain I'd bear
The sadness and the great despair
Would I have chosen the path I did
To have this child
Who so briefly lived?

Yes, I am certain
That I would
For all the laughter
All the good.

He taught us all
So much you see
Through his kindness,
Love and generosity.

Though he's gone
From us physically
He lives on in our hearts
Eternally

*Sandy Roush
TCF Lakes Area, MI
In memory of Whit*

Memorial Day



For each grave
where a soldier lies
at his rest

For each prayer
that is said today
out of love

For each sigh
of remembering
someone who died

Let us also give thought to
the mothers and fathers
the brothers and sisters
the friends and the lovers
whom death left behind.

*~Sascha Wagner
From: Winterson*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

May 5—"Helpful hints for Mother's Day"

June 2 - "What suggestions do you have to help us get through Father's Day?"

June 12 - Balloon Release/Family Picnic

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:
Patricia Vassallo, Mother of Sean

Important News! New Meeting Location

We are excited to inform you that we have secured a new meeting room! Hopefully you have already found out that as of April 7, we are now meeting at Bethlehem SCV Church. It is located at 27265 Luther Dr., Canyon Country 91351 in room 5. This church has graciously taken in our chapter and we are so excited to be having our meetings there. We think you will be too! It is a beautiful church and the meeting room is clean. Now that Covid has calmed down, we hope if you are in need of a meeting and some support from your Compassionate Friends we will see you at one of our next meetings!



Balloon Release-Family Picnic Sunday, June 12 @ 12:30

Good news! Once again we will be having our annual Balloon Release/Family Picnic. As in past years, it will be at the Bouquet Canyon Park located at 28127 Wellston Dr., Saugus beginning at **12:30pm**. All members of TCF as well as family members & friends are invited to participate!

This family event includes a few songs, poems, and the release of balloons in memory of our children, siblings, and grandchildren.

Again this year because of Covid and safety concerns, we are asking that you **bring your own food and drinks**. Our chapter will provide the dessert and balloons. You also might want to **bring a blanket or chairs for sitting** and if you have an extra **portable shade cover**, that would be great!

YOU MUST RSVP to Diane 661-373-5070, Alice 661 252-4374 or you can email TCF.santaclarita@gmail.com **BY JUNE 3, SO THAT WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH BALLOONS!!!**

PLEASE TRY TO ARRIVE ON TIME, we would like to start eating by 1:00.

Thank you,
The Steering Committee

News From National TCF



TCF 45th National Conference
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

TCF 45th National Conference
August 5-7, 2022
Houston, Texas

TCF National office is pleased to welcome back TCF's annual national conference this year in person. This is a unique event for bereaved parents, grandparents & siblings who are seeking renewed hope, ways of coping with their grief, and friendships with those who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. There are numerous workshops, keynote speakers, and the always memorable candle lighting program on Saturday evening, culminating with the Walk to Remember on Sunday morning.

This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. TCF's discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday.

For those not able to make your reservations online. Call the Marriott Reservation line at 877-688-4323. When calling be sure to mention The Compassionate Friends National Conference to receive your room rate.

Prescription for Healing:

*Share a memory with an
understanding friend.*

~Sascha Wagner



Father's...the hidden grievors

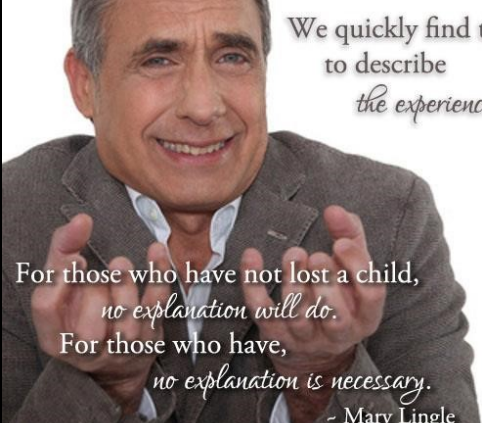
Father's are often referred to as the hidden grievors. When a child dies, thoughts generally go to the mothers - the agony they most certainly are suffering, their loneliness, emptiness, now that someone who was once a part of them is gone. Women tend to grieve outwardly, talking to their friends, crying, seeking out supportive groups and friends to be with whom to share their burden of sorrow.

Men, on the other hand, have a much more inward grieving style. Men are usually more factual than emotional. They accept more readily that nothing they say or do will reverse the situation; their child is irrecoverably gone from this earth. They may weep at times, but that is not their primary mode of morning. A man may throw himself into his job with fervor, perhaps to help alleviate the feeling that as the "family protector," he has failed to keep each member safe. He may begin or continue a project, or start a new activity, in memory of his loved one to whom he dedicates his efforts.

Men are more concrete in their thinking, but that does not mean they grieve less. What it often does mean is that they get less emotional support; people see them return to work, keep busy at home, and assume "they're over it." Little do others realize that men agonize through their grief and mourning fully as much as women and appreciate just as much the caring word, the hug, a recalled memory, a shared moment of silence.

Perhaps the best gift you could ever give a grieving father on Father's Day is the recognition of his loss, and affirming him as a father in mourning. A book especially for men in grief; a card recognizing that he is missing one of those who made him a father, yet he is still a father; a gift in memory of his child; or simply a hug, an arm around the shoulder, or a compassionate word will assure him that although he does not grieve outwardly much, those who truly care about him have not forgotten.


*~ Lovingly Lifted from TCF South Suburban Chapter
Evergreen Park, IL Newsletter, Vol XI Number 5*



We quickly find there are no words to describe
the experience of losing a child.

For those who have not lost a child,
no explanation will do.
For those who have,
no explanation is necessary.

- Mary Lingle




A Father's Day Poem

Bittersweet is the word I would use
Happy and sad both at once and confused
That is the feeling I get every June
On Father's Day and it's coming up soon
I will do my best to partake in the fun
Maybe barbeque and take in some fun
But a part of me will be very sad
Cause I won't hear you say
Happy Father's Day Dad!

*~Alan Pederson
TCF/USA*



The Boat

When we lose our children, we begin a journey. It starts on a stream and each one of us get into a boat. At first, the river is too fast and unfamiliar. We have no strength to put in the oars, but gradually we learn to row. Sometimes the current is too strong and we drift downstream again.

Along the way there are rapids, torrents and storms we all must overcome and continue on our journey. At times, it seems so hard - others pass us; we watch as they gain strength and give us the courage to go on. We can look back and see others just getting in the boat and help them too, always there is some to help us row. We are never alone in our river of tears.

And some day, when we've rowed and rowed, we will reach dock and there will be our children to greet us. They will help us ashore and tell us they knew we could do it. We owe it to our children to be the best people we can.

They always knew we were. They had the most wonderful parents. We are left here to show them we are. So keep rowing on that river of life, someone is always there with you.

*~Samantha Adams, Australia
In loving memory of her son, James
www.bereavedparents.org
Newsletter of BP/USA
A Journey Together*



The First Laugh

That sound of laughter I just heard
I know it can't be me-
A moment pure of merriment, non artificial glee?

My inner self so full of lead,
Heavy within my being
Could never; ever laugh again,
Or so it only seemed.

The power of nature I forgot,
How infinite and wise.
With strength to lift me from the depths
From which I couldn't rise.

And yet that foreign wondrous noise
Emitted from my throat
May well be wrongly called a laugh...
It's proper name is

HOPE

*~Shirley
Mother of Dean
TCF Victoria, Australia*



LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing. Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous "ouchies" can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so-we are stuck with this pain, this grief, and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable-some day.

TIME-the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child-the first word, first tooth, first date, and first car-now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME-to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be crazy and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments-but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child-HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us-it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much; it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

*By Darcie D. Sims
Lovingly Lifted from
TCF, Lehigh Valley Chapter Newsletter
May 2012*



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, 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.santaclarita@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!

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays



May

June

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Jeffrey Costin	5/17	Richard & Carol Costin	Daniel Renolds	6/22	Tom & Alice Renolds
Michael Arvizu	5/6	Robert & Juanita Arvizu	Darren Bullock	6/15	Carol Lock
Monique Gutierrez (Grandchild)	5/29	Irene Frenes	Cyrena Becerra	6/11	Mona Gonzalez
Sarah Crittenden	5/30	Jeanne Crittenden	Daniel McAlpine	6/27	Elaine McAlpine
Selena Cates	5/30	Eric & Elena Cates	Nicki Kent	6/15	Beth Kent
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	5/30	John & Joanne Campos	Mindy Siefert	6/7	Debbie Gardner
Joshua Matthews	5/14	Priscilla DiBlasio	Michael Uriarte	6/21	Liza Uriarte



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

May

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
Michael Uriarte	6/3	Liza Uriarte
Selena Cates	6/17	Eric & Elena Cates
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	6/17	John & Joanne Campos
Cisco Villasenor	6/24	Francisco & Aracely Villasenor
Natalie Zhamkochyan	6/23	Harry & Marine Zhamkochyan

The Song Is The Same

Different are the circumstances
 Of our child's death,
 Different are their names,
 Different was their life and the length of it,
 But their song was the same.
 They lived for one brief movement in history
 Much too soon they were gone,
 They left us here,
 parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters,

To remember the gift of their life
 and somehow go on.
 Whatever the time that has passed for us,
 Whatever the pain and grief that we claim,
 We are all here together to remember our kids,
 So your song becomes my song
 and our song is the same.

~Barb Seth
 TCF Madison, WI

