



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

July-August 2022

Volume 23, No. 4



**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.**

48660 Pontiac Trail #930808  
 Wixom, MI 48393  
 Toll Free (877) 969-0010  
 Email: [nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org)  
 Website: [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TCFUSA](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF  
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

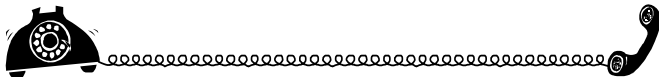
**Mailing Address:** 27949 Park Meadow Dr.  
 Santa Clarita, CA 91387  
 Email: [tcf.santaclarita@gmail.com](mailto:tcf.santaclarita@gmail.com)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/  
 TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA](http://www.facebook.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA)  
 Website: [www.compasionatefriends-scv.org](http://www.compasionatefriends-scv.org)

**MEETINGS**

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

**July 7, 2022**  
**August 4, 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)

**Vacation**



I still remember  
 when I could not sleep  
 at three a.m.  
 Awake and dark,  
 I did not want forgetting,  
 night after night.  
 Night after night.

I still remember  
 when I could not sleep  
 at three a.m.  
 Alone and mute  
 I sobbed the same old questions  
 into my mind.  
 Out of my mind.

I still remember  
 when I could not sleep  
 at three a.m.  
 And yet, today,  
 I find us new with laughter  
 here in the sun.  
 Here in the sun.

~Sascha Wagner

*When you are sorrowful look again in your heart,  
 and you shall see that in truth you are  
 weeping for that which  
 has been your delight.*

~Kahlil Gibran



## The Good Old Summertime??

The good old summertime has arrived. The time when we usually plan vacations, family reunions, picnics, etc. There are many activities going on, such as ballgames, golf, swimming, though for some of us a float trip on an Ozark stream is more enticing. Vacation Bible Schools and ice cream socials are held at churches. We usually adopt a more casual lifestyle, cook outdoors, and free ourselves of rigid schedules. Whatever our interests may be, this is the time for family togetherness. When our family is still intact it can be a wonderful time. .. If not, it can be a very painful time.

If this is the first summer following the death of your child, you may not have much inclination or energy for the usual activities, although many parents find that doing something physically demanding helps release the tension and anger associated with grief. Some have found a measure of healing and peace working in their yard or garden, or planting a flower garden in memory of their child. Others may feel obligated to attend family activities, and then they find that it does help to get involved. If you don't feel able to get out and get involved in your usual activities, don't be concerned, just do what you feel like you can do now.

Most of us think going away on a vacation or short trip somewhere will help us get away from the painful reminders of our child's death, and though it may be less painful than it was at home, we soon learn that we take our memories and emotions with us wherever we go. However, a vacation can be an incentive for doing something relaxing and enjoyable. Though most of us feel guilty if we enjoy ourselves very soon after our child has died.

When we made vacation plans for the summer following our son's death in February, I was a little apprehensive. We were going to visit our daughter, who had recently moved to Michigan, and invited our daughter-in-law (our son's widow) and her daughters, ages three and five, to accompany us on the vacation. From there, all our group traveled upstate to stay a few days at a lake resort. Our little granddaughters kept the trip upbeat and lively, and we were able to enjoy ourselves for the first time that summer. It was helpful for all of us, even though there were several intense emotional moments. Now we realize that everyone in our family was still grieving, each in their own way, and it would have been helpful to have allowed each one some private time to rest every day.

As newly bereaved parents, we are like pioneers, charting our way through an unknown area to our new destination. We've been told that it is peaceful there, but we can't feel that peace until we arrive. Those who have already made the trip report that life is different, yet good, in that new place. But we find that difficult to believe, because we are still traveling that long, rugged trail, and the end is not yet in sight. "Don't be afraid," we are told, "we made it, and you will make it too. Just take your time, and you will find your way." Those who have made the journey encourage us to believe that we'll make it through the wilderness of grief and find peace.

As one who has found peace at the end of the journey, I'm thankful to those who encourage me during those dark days when I could not see the way. Their loving support, and my faith, gave me hope that life could be good and meaningful again, and now it truly is.

If you are still struggling along, unable to see a future without pain and confusion, please reach out to those of us who have been there. We are here to take your hand and help you find the way to healing. Be kind to yourself and others, and take time to relax and remember. Your child would want you to try to find some ways to enjoy life once again, without feeling guilty. This summer you may find the road to renewed hope and recovery.

*~Lenora Sanders*

*Lovingly Lifted from July/August 2003  
Issue of TCF Sugarland, TX Newsletter*



## Fireworks

You used to run around with a sparkler in your hand, pretending you were a Minute Man or Patriot drummer.

It didn't matter, there was time for all.

You'd wrap a rag around your head and take your toy drum, and tromped around the yard.

Whatever you were on those wonderful nights, you loved it!

And we watched and laughed as you waved your tiny flag,

Thinking maybe you were the one who really understood what we celebrated.

Now the drum is gone and no one gets sparklers any more.

The yard is quiet on the Fourth of July.

Do you still march and play the drum for others?

*~Author unknown*

*We can't compare our grief process.  
It is our own personal journey to embrace.  
It's yours to travel, and no one can  
travel it more gracefully than you.*

*~Linsey Henke*

# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**July 7 - "Vacations" Yes or No???**

**August 4 - "Meaningful Memories"**

Sharing creative ideas how to honor, stay connected and preserve memories of our loved ones.



## TCF Family Picnic/Balloon Release

On June 12, we held our annual Family Picnic/Balloon release at the Bouquet Canyon Park. Unfortunately we weren't able to get our usual spot even after arriving at 10:00 am to secure it!! But we made due with another area in the park that was close to the parking lot, we just had to spread out to find the patches of shade from the trees. Our gathering was much larger than last year and it was so amazing to see the love and friendship that comes together to honor our children, grandchildren and siblings!

Just like last year, we each brought our own food to eat and our chapter provided a cake & cookies for dessert. When everyone was done eating we filled our balloons and formed a circle to start our brief program in an open area of the park. The poems and songs always tug at our hearts and bring some tears but we know how important it is to be there. As the balloons were released we listened to one final song, Unfortunately for the first time ever, this day was very windy and a lot of our balloons drifted into the trees instead of fading up into the beautiful blue skies. Someone said "It's because they don't want to leave us".



We finished this rather warm day 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 some tears. But we were with Compassionate Friends and family and the tears eventually turned into smiles with the help of hugs! We hope this day has helped you a little further along in your grief journey.

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

## 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:  
Ellie & Amanda, Parents of Logan

## Thanks

Thanks to the friend who did know the right words to say:  
"There is a group in town that might help you."

Thanks to the parent who somehow found the courage to call that phone number and find out about "that group."

Thanks to the dad who said after the first meeting that he could never come back—but did.

Thanks to the parent who, at the fifth meeting, put her arms around a "new one" and said: "They really can help."

Thanks to the mom who, for the first time, was again able to bake cookies—for the "Compassionate Friends."

Thanks to the homemaker who could never talk in front of people—who became a facilitator.

Thanks to the six-foot father who cried in front of the other men—and didn't say he was sorry.

Because of you, we will be able to help someone we don't even know— next month.

*~John DeBoer  
TCF Greater Omaha, NE*



## 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



## Summer Memories

Summertime is a happy time for most people in this country; vacations, holidays, family reunions, relaxed days at the pool, evenings in the backyard talking with family and friends, the smell of a fresh rain, the long days, the cooling nights, fresh mowed grass and flowers that bloom profusely.

Despite Houston's heat, summer has become a treasured time for me. My son was a child of summer. Born in May, he loved the summer sun on his face and the wind in his hair as he first rode a tricycle, then a bicycle, then drove a car. Those were wonderful times for him.

The summer solstice on June 21 was a favorite day for us both. Since the summer solstice is the longest day of the year, Todd particularly loved to watch the sunrise and sunset. I found myself doing that again this year. As I looked at the sun directly overhead at noon (1:00 pm DST) I made the comment that this is the one perfectly balanced day of the year. Later as I watched a beautiful solstice sunset, I remarked to my husband about the light...the gorgeous light. I was seeing Todd in that light. He was laughing, chasing lightening bugs, running and spinning and turning, filled with the joy of summer. He was happy.

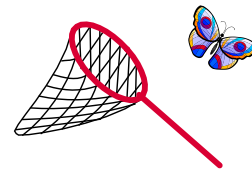
I listened to the neighbors' children playing, and I thought about all the wonderful summer days I had spent with my son. I am thankful that I had that time. I am thankful that my child was a son of summer. He found much joy in nature, in the outdoors, in activities that took him out of the ordinary and into the sublime.

That's how it is for bereaved parents. We eventually come to a place where we realize that our joyful memories have overtaken the pain of the loss of our child to death. We wouldn't trade the time we shared with our children for anything or any other experience.

We have many relationships in our lives, but the unique nature of the parent-child relationship is so special, so deep, so life changing, that we endure and even embrace the pain because we had, for that time in our lives, a relationship of pure love and pure joy with our child. There is no way to measure the depth, width, or volume of a parent's love. It exceeds every other human relationship. Yes, we miss them terribly. We weep silently into our pillows at night. We light candles, take flowers to the cemetery, wear their favorite colors, treasure pictures of our children and keep them forever in our hearts. This is a big part of life for every bereaved parent.

Somehow, on the summer solstice, I felt my child's presence in the light of the day and the beautiful rose color of the solstice sunset. I could hear his voice, see his smile and feel his emotions. Peace slips into our hearts in extraordinary ways.

*~Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In Memory of my son Todd Mennen  
TCF Katy, Texas*



## Catching Butterflies

It often hurt to come upon reminders of my son  
Tho' often since I lost him I would search  
around for one  
Which always brought on sadness and the tears  
that I would shed  
Were cause by names or faces,  
all things that I would dread.

But then one day I came upon a man who'd lost his son  
I found that things I ran from,  
He wouldn't even shun.  
But rather he would treasure and I said I wondered why  
He told me that he called them "Catching Butterflies"

This view of his intrigued me; I wanted to hear more  
And learned that he took all of them  
and carefully would store  
All of the reminders that I chose to push away  
He would tuck deep down inside his heart  
each and every day.

Now a name or likeness when catching me off guard  
Does not upset me as it did and I don't find it hard  
For now instead I see these times as opportunities  
To see my son awakened I these new fresh memories.

*~Dottie Williams  
TCF Pittsburgh, PA*



## This Is Not The End Of Joy

Grieving is bits of many things - memories, regrets, reminders - each of which bears its own special weight in our burden of sorrow. Each bit has to be gone through patiently, silently, painfully, as one goes through old papers in a one forgotten trunk, considering each one separately, remembering, assigning it to some new box within our hearts.

Healing, too, is bits of many things—smiles which multiply as the days pass; chilling remembrances turned warm by the returning sun. A day will come when there will be more healing than of grieving, and reasons for joy will begin to pile up in the freshly-swept rooms of our lives.

*~Molly Fumia  
From: Safe Passages*



# Love Gifts

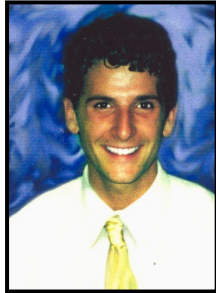


## Were Received From:

*Tammy Gauld*

In Loving Memory of her son:

**Bradley  
McBurney**  
4/22 - 7/18



*Elaine McAlpine*

In Loving Memory of her son:

**Daniel  
McAlpine**  
6/27 - 8/29



*When you are sorrowful look again in heart,  
and you shall see that in truth  
you are weeping for that which  
has been your delight.*

*~Kahlil Gibran*

## Making Progress

The day you died,  
my spirit sought to turn away from life;  
It could not face the pain  
that pierced its being like a knife.

I wanted to go with you.  
Why should my life go on?  
I found no earthly reason  
to arise and greet the dawn.

I could not find a purpose;  
How pointless it all seemed.  
Reality seemed distant.  
Was my life a bitter dream?

I seemed to be suspended  
in a tiny piece of time;  
Simply going through the motions  
like an actor or a mine.

Then, bit by bit, as I endured  
each never-ending day,  
I learned to smile and laugh again  
in a tenuous kind of way.

And now, although I miss you more  
than any words could tell,  
No longer am I mired in  
a brutal, needless hell.

I know I cannot escape  
my sadness and my pain.  
But I need not give it power  
to dominate again.

Once again I notice rainbows,  
the stars adrift in space,  
a flower's perfumed beauty,  
and the sunshine on my face.

I need not search so desperately  
to find some subtle meaning,  
some purpose in the hours enclosed  
between daybreak and evening.

I find delight recaptured  
in hearing, touching, seeing;  
Once more I've come to know  
the peaceful joy of being.

*~Peggy Kociscin,  
Albuquerque, NM  
Lovingly Lifted from*

*St. Paul MN TCF June/July/Aug/Sept 2017 Newsletter*

# *“Forever In Our Hearts”*

## Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



### *Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays*

#### July

#### August

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Olivia Kares	7/14	Mike Kares,	Michelle Briones	8/24	Bert & Diane Briones
Whitney Moore	7/1	Beth Moore	Sean McPhie	8/2	Fran McPhie
Greg Hilton	7/11	Kathy Hilton	Steven Sprague	8/4	Marie Sprague
Amanda Perez	7/19	Carrie Hall	Eric Rodriguez	8/11	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
Kevin Petersen	7/26	Cheryl Petersen	Nicholas Colley	8/22	Scott & Jade Colley
Cisco Villasenor	7/31	Franciso & Aracely	Andy Benaudes	8/17	Jeanette Geiger
Roberto Avila	7/14	Maricela Vela	Cameron Morey	8/26	Dennis & Linda Morey
Sean Tessier	7/25	Patricia Vassallo			



### *Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

#### July

#### August

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Bradley McBurney	7/18	Tammy Gauld	Joshua Sparage	8/6	Bonnie & Gary Sparage
Bailey Haney (Grandchild)	7/11	Myra Kulick	Daniel McAlpine	8/29	Elaine McAlpine
Melissa Lind	7/6	Marcy Torrey	Nicki Kent	8/31	Beth Kent
Amanda Perez	7/17	Carrie Hall	Randal Smith	8/2	Sharon Smith
Amin Moinzadeh	7/31	Azita Azarpira	Randal Smith (Sibling)	8/2	Crystal Smith
Miles Davis	7/28	Michele Davis	Matthew Weiss	8/18	William Weiss
Alexander Gertsch	7/4	Shane & Dena Gertsch	Cameron Morey	8/26	Dennis & Linda Morey
Roberto Avila	7/21	Maricela Vela	Douglas McGee	8/28	Mike & Debbie McGee

### Silent Stories

Somehow they press against the  
windowpane of your mind.

Tales of wanting  
Tales of longing  
Tales of grief.  
A drumbeat,  
Calling out loss.

But  
We remember.  
But  
We still love,  
We will not be silent  
We will speak their names,  
Always,  
We will love them,  
Forever.

~Melissa Anne Schroeter  
TCF Rockland County, NY

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## Memories

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



- Sascha Wagner