



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

Nov-Dec 2022

Volume 23, 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, regeneration and beauty.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF
 SANTA CLARITA VALLEY**

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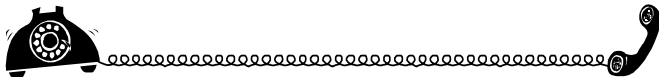
MEETINGS

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

November 3, 2022
December 1, 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)
 Joanne Campos (Remembrance Secretary)
 Steve Crittenden (Webmaster)
 Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)



Now Autumn

What a strange time is autumn
 more than a season,
 autumn can be like a mood.
 Softness and warmth and abundance
 drift from the sky like a smile.

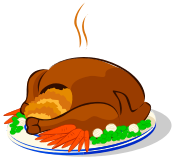
And you remember the seasons
 before the children died.

They do seem far away sometimes,
 those seasons, now.
 But not the children -
 they are always here
 in this strange time, this autumn,
 when the softness
 and the warmth
 and the abundance
 of unseen children
 drift from the sky like a smile.

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

*The seasons around us are changing
 just as the seasons of grief change.
 Be kind and patient with
 yourself and others.*

~K. Cantrell
 TCF Frankfort, KY



A New Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving morning 1991, I was standing at the sink, peeling potatoes. The turkey was in the oven, the pies were cooling on the sideboard. Just another normal holiday morning. At 10:30 the phone rang. I was closest, so I answered it.

That call from the San Diego medical examiner changed my life forever.

Within seconds our whole household was in chaos and shock our beautiful daughter Nancy had been killed in a car accident earlier that morning.

How could this be? I had just talked with her less than 24 hours before. She had wished us a "Happy Turkey Day" and closed her call with "I love you Mom." That was to be the last time I would hear her voice.

How did I get from that day of wrenching pain to this day nine years later? The simple answer is: a minute, an hour, a day at a time...putting one foot in front of the other, reaching out for people who had been where I was.

The first Thanksgiving after Nancy's death was the most difficult. I couldn't bring myself to cook or even look at a turkey. The decorated plates and napkins in the store were sickening to me. My solution to the turkey was to serve prime rib instead. That strategy got me through the next two Thanksgivings.

One of my watershed moments came on the fourth Thanksgivings after Nancy's accident. My surviving children wanted the traditional turkey-and-trimmings dinner. They missed the old ways. The truth is, they had moved forward and they wanted me to take that step also.

Reluctantly, I obliged, but with a heavy heart. With red roses nearby and her candle lit, we gathered together and counted our blessings.

Today with love and support of family and friends, I will once again prepare the Thanksgiving dinner. It will always be "different." I can't change what was. I can, however, choose to embrace the life I have now. There is so much more to be grateful for. Not a day goes by that I don't count my blessings. Among the greatest of these is the love of family and friends, and peace in my heart.

I truly believe that those blessings can be yours, too. Time, tears, love of family, good friends, and reinvestment can lead you there.

*~Mary Conway
TCF Nashville, TN
In memory of her daughter, Nancy*

*Hope is a tender song,
distant or near.
Music that waits for you
patiently waits till you
find it and hear.*

~Sascha Wagner



I'M THANKFUL

I'm thankful this Thanksgiving
that my grief is not so new.
Last year it was so painful to
think of losing you.
Death can't claim my love for you
though we are far apart.
Sweet memories will always be
engraved upon my heart.
Time can never bring you back
but it can help me be
thankful for the years of joy
you brought our family.
To all the parents with grief so new
I share your loss and sorrow.
I pray you find with faith and time
the blessings of each tomorrow.

*~Charlotte Irick
TCF Idaho Falls, ID*

Fall

Leaves so bright and golden in the sun,
glistening in early morning with dew.
Another season has begun,
another fall to see, without you.



Pumpkins so ripe and beautifully bright,
in the still of a frosty night.
An array of colors for us to enjoy,
their beauty only dulled by the thought
of our emptiness without our little boy.

The wind and the cold and the awesome dark skies,
somehow disappear in the memory of your
beautiful brown eyes.
We see the beauty of fall colors so clear,
oh how I wish you were here!

The harvest moon shining through the barren trees,
as we prepare for the first hint of snow.
Reminds us of a child who only meant to please,
and all those memories only you will know.

Life goes on, as the seasons do.
But there's one thing that stays the same,
and that is OUR LOVE FOR YOU!

*~Jean Staicar
TCF, Central Iowa*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

- November 3 - Meeting**, Make Luminaries (see below)
Please join us as we decorate a luminary for our Candle Lighting
November 28 - Deadline to send in picture for video
December 1 - Meeting, "Handling the Holidays"
December 11 - Candle Lighting Program



Luminaries

During our November meeting we will be selling and decorating luminaries in memory of our children, siblings or grandchildren for \$10.00 each as a small fundraiser. All the necessary supplies will be available for you. This is the only fundraiser our chapter has. As this is a fundraiser, we would appreciate that you not bring luminaries from home or from past years to our ceremony. These beautiful, lighted luminaries will line the walkway to our Candle Lighting Remembrance Program and then they are yours to take home!

Also, please don't forget if your **child's picture** is not already on our **video presentation** and you want it to be included, you will need to add it. Please email a digital photo to Alice at AL5renolds@twc.com by **November 28**.

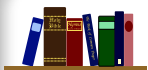


Food Drive

The Bethlehem SCV Church where we have our meetings and where our Candle Lighting program will be held this year is collected food items for the SCV Food Panty.

We are asking our Compassionate Friends families to join with them and donate a non-perishable food item. You may bring it to our November or December meetings and to our Candling Lighting Program to help them in their efforts.

The church is helping us out tremendously this year with our program. Let's show our appreciation by helping them and the SCV Food Pantry this holiday season!



TCF Library

Don't forget to take some time to browse through the library shelves at our next meeting. You just might find a good book to check out to help you in your journey of grief.

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:

Jaswir & Harvinder, Parents of Jeeven
Manuel & Concepcion, Parents of Justice
Ericka Rios, Sister of Justice
Melanie Miller, Mother of Troy



21st Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

December 11 @ 6:30 PM

We are very happy to inform you that we will once again be holding our annual Candle Lighting program. **It will be held indoors in the main Worship Center** at the church where we hold our meetings. This Worldwide Candle Lighting Remembrance Program will be on Sunday, December 11 beginning at **6:30PM** @ Bethlehem SCV, 27265 Luther Dr. Canyon Country, 91351.

This very touching evening includes music, video presentation, the reading of poems, and the lighting of candles (battery operated) which will be provided to all who attend.

We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. 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 mark your calendar and invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to come and share with you this very moving celebration of all children who have gone too soon.

If you can't be with us, be sure to light a candle at home so that...

"their light may always shine"



Ornamental Memories

Ornaments brightly decorate the Christmas tree.
Some delicate, some sturdy, some old, some new.

Different shapes and sizes,
Crystal, glass, wood or ceramic,
Ornaments dangle on the branches,
Catching colors from a window, or a candle,
Or a twinkling light.

The old ornaments bring back memories of Christmases
gone by,

The new ornaments represent hope & promises for the future.

And when the holidays are over,

The ornaments safely wrapped & packed away in their boxes
till next holiday season,

We still recall the priceless ornaments

That are our precious memories.

Some funny, some happy, some sad,

Times of celebrations birthdays, holidays and vacations.

They glow and sparkle in our minds, catching the light
of our memory

From hearing a favorite song, or seeing a familiar sight.

We never pack away these ornamental memories,

We recall them fondly and often, they are cherished
& treasured.

They brightly and forever decorated our family tree
Throughout all seasons of our life.

~Meg Avery

In Loving Remembrance

Especially at Christmas of our son, James

Chanukah



Chanukah has always been a favorite holiday for my
family and me.

Lighting the Menorah.

The smell of Latkes frying in the pan.

The smiles on my boys faces.

The excitement of eight nights of my two little boys
opening presents (something just small silly gifts, it didn't matter).
Memories of a happy and innocent time I hold fast to those special
holiday times...shared the past so bittersweet. The future now not
as we planned, yet still to be experience with hope and courage.

Always remembering my two little boys sharing the fun
and excitement with my husband and I with the wonder of
innocence on their faces and a gleam in their eyes as the
Chanukah Menorah was lit and the blessings recited...one child,
now a young man with a wife and son of his own, his younger
brother watching over us with love from a place we have yet to
discover.

I smile for the wonderful memories that this time of the
year evokes, while my eyes fill with tears.

~Judy Blumsack

In memory of Craig Adam Blumsack



The Christmas Tears

I will gather with the family, Christmas Day is finally here.
But I will reserve a moment of time to shed my Christmas
Tears.

This special moment is just for us, a mother and her son
I'll laugh and cry about times gone by and all the things
we've done.

As I sing our Christmas carols, I'll open the gift you made
for me.

This gift is more precious than gold itself, It's the gift of
your memory.

As I sift through the layers of tissue that are in this gift of
mine,

It takes me back to a Christmas past, to a brighter and
happier time.

I'll relive all the Christmases that we had for twenty-two
years, knowing that there will be no more.

But you have bestowed a second gift that starts things all
anew,

A granddaughter to mend the hole in my heart, that was
left by losing you.

I trust these precious gifts of yours will sustain me through
the years,

And maybe there will be a Christmas day

With no more Christmas tears.

~Linda Mcinturff

TCF Southern Maryland

Coming Unwrapped



We wrap ourselves for the holidays much like the
presents we give. The brightly colored paper hides what's
within. When people look at us they only see the outside.

We promise ourselves we will not come
unwrapped. We'll make it through the family celebrations,
the church services, and the big occasion. The paper and
the ribbon will remain intact.

But it is the small thing that manages to untie the
bow. The little insignificant moment, the Christmas parade,
the search for the tree, the discovered ornament, the
special carol, the memory and the paper gets wrenched
off. The true Christmas present shows itself. The inevitable
tide of feelings bursts out of the artificially decorated
façade. The emotions pour out. The intense anger wells
up. The tears shed and the holidays come. These are as
sure as the tides of the sea and the march of time.

Only a compassionate friend, a bereaved parent,
knows of what I speak. Yet the answer isn't in fighting or in
denying these feelings. We have paid the price. We have
the right to grieve. The resolution of our grief is the
grieving. Our hope for all who read this letter is that you
will make it through the holidays. We cannot make the
aching go away, but know there are others who suffer with
you. We have made it, and together will continue on.

~Hank Hewett

TCF Scranton, PA



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Kirk & Dianne Mueller

In Loving Memory of their daughter:

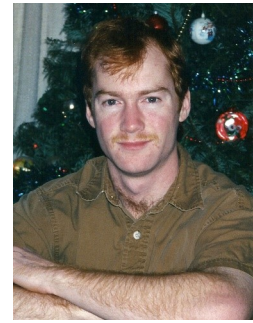
**Melissa
(Mueller)
Matters
3/26 - 11/3**



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.santaclarita@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 passage of time does not cause
our grief to end,
but its softening touch helps us to survive.*

~Wayne Loder

Dear Child of Mine

Dear child of mine, who died before your time,
I am grateful for your life.
Though death brought the end of hopes and dreams,
still I am grateful for your life.

Through you I have known joy and sorrow, laughter and tears,
through you my life has been enriched,
my compassion heightened and
I am more keenly aware of the grief of others.
I am grateful for your life.

Now I draw upon my memories of you,
some happy, some sad.
They are priceless, precious memories
to help me bear the pain.
Through them I will learn to live again.
I have been blessed by your life and left with your love.
I will share the love and
strive to live to be a blessing to others.

Dear child of mine, though you died before your time,
you are never far away from me.
I have loved you in my heart of hearts
and there I will love you through eternity.
I am grateful for your life...
Dear Child of Mine.

*~Betty Stevens
TCF Baltimore, MD*

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

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	Michael Leone	12/6	Mariacristina Leone
Loren Mai	11/20	Juan & Miriam Mai	Erica Findley	12/15	Kevin & Pam Findley
Alfonso Flores	11/27	Elsa Rosales (Aunt)	Natalie Zhamkochyan	12/12	Harry & Marine
			Nico Trogan	12/24	Amy Trogan
			Andro Barsoum	12/10	Odette Awad
			Logan Ortega	12/22	Ellie & Amanda



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	Julian Burns	12/13	Robert Burns
Kevin Petersen	11/18	Cheryl Petersen	Joshua Mathews	12/2	Priscilla DiBlasio
Alfonso Flores	11/13	Elsa Rosales (Aunt)	Sean Tessier	12/5	Patricia Vassallo
Andro Barsoum	11/04	Odette Awad			



A Solitary Journey



Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

~Helen Steiner Rice

