



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Mar-Apr 2023

Volume 24, No. 2



**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, daughter, brother, 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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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.compassionatefriends-scv.org](http://www.compassionatefriends-scv.org)

#### MEETINGS

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

**March 2, 2023**

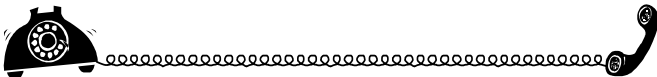
**No Meeting in April!! - See Info Pg 3**

TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING **Bethlehem SCV**

PLACE: **27265 Luther Dr. Room 5 (Second Driveway)  
Canyon Country, CA 91351**

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



#### FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISENER, 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)



## From the Ashes of Grief

In the early morning fog of a spring day  
The sunlight drifts slowly across the lake  
Lifting the dark shadows of night.  
The honking geese frolic in the early morning rays  
of sunshine  
While the birds sing of promises yet to come.

Through the dark clouds of grief,  
Slivers of sunlight filter down.  
The pain and fear residing in my heart  
Is starting to give way  
To the hope of finding joy once again in my life.

The warmth of the sun flows through my body  
And I now feel and see flickers of that joy.  
It is but a fleeting moment in my thoughts.  
But it fills me with the hope of perhaps  
Finding peace once again.

The forever tears cleanse my heart and my pain.  
They pave the way for love and laughter once again  
in my life.  
My heart will forever be empty from the loss of  
my precious child.  
But the sparkling sunlight spreads light around that hole  
in my heart.  
Gentle healing is beginning; springing anew from  
the ashes of grief.

~Lana Golembeski

Reprinted from TCF National Magazine

"We Need Not Walk Alone" Spring/Summer 2015

*"Behind each dark flower of sorrow waits a  
memory of the blessings you shared."*

~Sascha Wagner

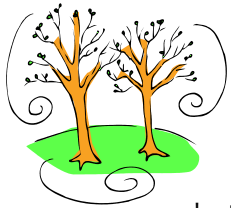
From her book "The Sorrow & The Light"



## Hope

Hope is a robin singing  
 On a rainy day;  
 He knows the sun will shine again  
 Though the skies may now be gray.  
 Like the robin let us be.  
 Meet trouble with a smile;  
 And soon the sun will shine for us  
 In just a little while.

~Beverly J. Anderson



## Out of Winter, Into Spring

In the dark of winter the skies are gray, the trees are bare, the grass is brown and all the world appears to be dead. Yet inside the branches of the barren trees and underneath the dormant grass, a silent happening is taking place. The seeds and juices of new life are moving within and underneath. It is a silent, slow process not seen with the eye until one day a tiny green leaf bud appears on a tree branch and another and another. Little grass blades begin to emerge out of the brown and seemingly lifeless ground. Again and again the leaves appear and the grass grows and thickens and a new world has emerged. We see patches of beautiful flowers in variations of bright colors, the birds come and nest in the trees, butterflies flutter about and we realize the miracle of a new season - Springtime. Out of the long, cold, barren winter, a transformation has occurred. A new world has happened. One that is fresh and full of promise of new life a miracle.

The grief process is much like this. We feel barren and alone. Our world is cold and gray and we do not feel alive inside. Yet all the while, the grief work taking place in each of us is a transforming process; new life is silently at work within our inner being bringing forth a new life until we emerge as a new person in a new world. It is a world quite different from our old world, for we have survived through our suffering to our rebirth. No one ever said it would be easy. We cried. We hurt. We stumbled. We sometimes doubted and some of us cursed the darkness. Our grief season was long and hard but we told ourselves "this too shall pass". And so it did.

And finally the springtime of our soul was created. Darkness gave way to sunshine; the bitter cold gave way to warmth. Desolation gave way to hope and we let go and embraced the new season of our soul.

A miracle happened.



~Connie Andrews  
TCF Harvey County, Kansas

## "The Roller Coaster of Grief"



Early Grief mimics a dark roller coaster stalled on the bottom track. Seemingly we are half crazed, with no hope of coming back.

But eventually, the seconds, minutes, hours do move into days. We begin the healing process attempting to find our own way.

Struggling, we crawl up the tracks striving cautiously to make the hill. Only to lose our balance, sliding backward to the bottom of the track, still.

The word, indescribable, marks this early road of horrific grief. As we continue to live our life in total disbelief.

We have stalled, lingering and are imprisoned at the bottom of the track, but in time, our eyes will see more clearly, the possibility of coming back.

Journeying onward in our grief, we tend to sway on the track somewhat. But we are in denial, the acceptance of our loved one's death is not.

Exhausted to a point of pure insanity as we live through the horror of our nightmare. Over and over, we make this one and only statement, "It just isn't fair."

Swinging this way and that as we spin and whirl around.  
 But no relief or peace for our ongoing suffering to be found.

Months do finally and surely flow quietly and sadly into years.  
 We now have often faced those demons of our worst fears.

And we no longer remain stalled at the bottom of the track.  
 This long roller coaster ride has assuredly brought us back.

But forever is our grief and pain; thus never to have a choice,  
 until our life on earth is over, and glorious eternity shall be fulfilled.

~Dianna Jacobs  
 In memory of my daughter, my best friend,  
 Kanda Michelle Jacobs  
 5/73-4/04

*I move a step ahead and then back,  
 but still gaining,  
 if even but a little.*

~Mary Rapke  
 TCF Grand Junction, CO

# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**March 2** - Meeting, "Grief Support" - What hurts and what helps you the most.

**April 6** - **NO MEETING!!! PLEASE SEE INFO BELOW**

# No April Meeting

We are sorry to inform you that we will not be having a meeting for the month of **APRIL**. The church where we hold our meetings will be having a special function that night and unfortunately we will not be able to have our meeting. It is way too hard to find another meeting area for just one night, therefore, no meeting in April.

We truly apologize for this inconvenience. Please feel free to reach out to any of the numbers listed on the front page if you are in need of talking to a loving listener!

Dear Compassionate Friends:

We are always looking for a little extra help and would welcome fresh and new ideas. Please consider joining our steering committee! We meet approximately every 3-4 months to plan our chapter's activities and manage our business matters.

*"An opportunity to **HELP**  
is an opportunity to **HEAL**"*

# Important Newsletter Renewal Time

We usually update our mailing list/data base every two years but it has been 3 years! So we are in the processing of doing that now. You should be receiving your renewal letter in the mail soon. So please make sure that we have your most **up-to-date mailing address!** When you receive your form, please make sure to fill it out and return it by the date noted on the form if you would like to remain on our mailing list and continue receiving our newsletters and note cards.

*Thank you,  
Alice Reynolds, Editor*

## 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:  
Matt & Daisy, Parents of Jax  
Chantal, Mother of Caleb



## In This Place

Brave hearts, you are here. You have traveled a dreadful distance. You have come, seeking solace, understanding, hope, threads to patch what death's so cruelly undone.

In this place you can relax and breathe...the coats of others' expectations take off. Walk into these few hours as into an oasis where draughts of love and memories can be quaffed. In this place all names can be spoken; in this place each one's story may be told.

We will not be discouraged by your sorrow; in this place ALL feelings, we enfold. Here laughter does not mean we are forgetting; we do not count how many tears are shed. Both fuel us, fellow travelers, give us courage, for the long and winding road we see ahead. And those we love are pleased we are together, smile down on us, and bless this day. Glad for every tiny step we are taking as they send their light to guide us on our way.

Traveling with us as we journey onward, sending for what the miles may bring, they are a part of everything we do that matters - in every dance we dance, and every song we sing.

*~Genesse Bourdeau Gentry  
Written 30 July 2004  
For those attending their first meeting of  
The Compassionate Friends*

*"Grief is like a valley,  
a winding valley where any bend may  
reveal a totally new landscape."*

*~C.S. Lewis*



## In the Springtime of Your Grief

Spring has fragile beginnings; a tiny shoot of green that emerges from the cold earth, a hint of pastel against the brownish grass, a bud that awakens with the morning sun. Sometimes spring comes so quietly we almost miss it, but once it begins, it is impossible to ignore the daily growth and change. The morning sun brings sounds that were not there before. The breeze carries warmth that invites us to venture outside of ourselves. A promise is released with the budding and blossoming surrounding us. Hope emerges for the beginning of a new season; change is in the air.

What we experience in the springtime of the year is what we can experience in the springtime of our grief. There begins to be a growing radiance. The radiance is not just around us; it is within us. A gradual warming of the heart silences the chill of intense pain. The natural unfolding of the grief process moves gently to remind us that we will survive. Life is changing and growth emerges through the changes. The song of our hearts that seemed off key begins to experience a harmonious blend of the past and the present. The songs of the birds invite us to join them in celebration of new life. In the springtime of our grief, there can be a new song for us to sing. It will be a song we composed through the heartache of loss.

Optimism for a better day may awaken us one morning. Hearing laughter and discovering it is coming from within ourselves gives us promise for today. Dreams and hopes for a better tomorrow shine brightly with the morning sun. Surviving the winter of our grief with the openness to embrace change is a decision to embrace loss and integrate its impact into the fabric of our lives. It can be a willingness to explore new possibilities that create a different landscape to behold. We can make a decision that we will begin to appreciate what we still have, not just focus on what is missing.

We will know when we have made that decision. Something buds; something opens. The harshness of winter is softened with new life and new growth. It is not something we can force; it is something that unfolds when the time is right. The springtime of grief arrives with no dramatic entrance, no flashing lights. The stillness of the beauty unfolds and captures our attention. It is happening around us, but it is also happening in us.

If spring has already crossed the path of your personal journey of grief, rejoice! But, if the chill of winter remains in your heart, be encouraged; spring is on its way. Look for it, expect it and it will be yours to experience around you and in you!

*~Judi Fischer, Cleveland, Ohio  
Reprinted from: A Journey Together Newsletter  
Volume IX No 2, Spring 2004  
Bereaved Parents of the USA  
www.bereavedparentsusa.org*



## Like The Butterfly

It fluttered above my head  
Weightless in the soft breeze.  
I reached up my hand  
It lit on my finger.

Waving glistening wings gently.  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep and  
Finding all those cherished memories.  
As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello once more.

*~Leslie Lanford  
TCF North Platte, NE*



## Easter & Passover Seasons

The Easter and Passover seasons are upon us. They are special family times that make it more obvious that one is missing. Some parents are struggling with what they believe anymore. The pretty new dresses and hats don't seem to matter as much as they did. There are more important things on our minds now. We are facing the renewal of life all around us—and yet the missing child's life is not renewable. We hurt because life is going on and his or hers is not.

These are normal reactions for some when grief is fresh, for the changing of seasons is a poignant time for many. Those of us who have had the necessary time with to convey to those who have not that it won't always be this painful. When your grief softens (and it will), so will many of the hurtful responses. Get out in the sunshine, go for a walk, smell the fragrance of the flowers and allow the warmth of the season to permeate your being. It just may make your day a little lighter, and a lighter day is worth trying for.

*~Excerpt from Spring Has Sprung  
By Mary Cleckley  
Reprinted from: A Journey Together  
Bereaved Parents of the USA  
www.bereavedparentsusa.org*





## No Greater Pain

I know you mean well but you don't understand  
There are no words to explain...  
Although on the surface I may appear fine,  
Remember, I buried a child of mine  
And there is no greater pain.

Grief is taboo in our civilized world,  
I despise this hideous game.  
I must smile while going insane.  
For God's sake a part of me died,  
You can't imagine how often I've cried  
And there is no greater pain.

If I look well or laugh when you joke,  
You think I'm my old self again.  
I'm raw inside, a shell of me,  
The woman you knew can no longer be...  
And there is no greater pain.

Look deep in my eyes, acknowledge my loss  
As my heart beats its hollow refrain.  
I'm caught in a web of infinite *whys*  
I'll mourn for my son 'till the rest of me dies  
And there is no greater pain.

*~Madelaine Kasden  
In memory of Neill, Beloved Son  
TCF Babylon, NY*



## 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 our2angels@twc.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!

*As long as we have memories,  
yesterday remains.  
As long as we have hope,  
tomorrow awaits.*

*~unknown*



## Transition in Grief

It is good to speak of our children, to recall the wonderful memories of their lives. It is good to honor our children with ritual, ceremony, prayer, and thanksgiving for the gift that will always be our child. It is good to celebrate the life of our child, to cherish our time with them.

It is also wise to acknowledge that by honoring our child in these ways, we are doing our grief work. This work also involves pushing, pulling, and dragging ourselves through the purgatorial fog that transcends our every thought after our child dies. The grief is overwhelming; the process of grief work is demanding, punishing, and often harsh.

Either we stay in one place, "stuck" in our grief, or we reach out and help ourselves. There are no other choices.

The loss of our child to death is the most traumatic event of our adult lives. We have lost the future, and we have lost an immense piece of ourselves when our child died. We must work to rebuild ourselves. Rebuild ourselves for a new life; a life without our child sharing this physical plane with us.

But as we share our child with others, speak of the life that no longer is, celebrate that life in ritual, ceremony, and memories shared, we are doing our grief work. At first it is difficult. The throat swells, the breathing is shallow, and the words are so difficult to find. But we pursue, for we do not want the memory of our child to be erased.

We carry our child forward into the future; we see the world for two now. We cherish this new journey that we take for our child and ourselves. This effort is our child's legacy. Our child will live as long as we live...through our words, actions, thoughts, memories, and memorial efforts.

And as we do these things that are good, we find the burden lifts ever so slightly. Days, weeks, months, and then years pass. At some point we realize that we, too, have transitioned. Our subconscious mind has accepted the worst that life can give, and we have emerged as different people cherishing the goodness that is always our precious child.

*~Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX  
In Memory of her son, Todd Mennen*

# "Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

*Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays*



## March

## April

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Timothy Renolds	3/17	Tom & Alice Renolds	Erik Fleischer	4/26	Rita Fleischer
Michael Rodriguez	3/7	Debbie DiCorrado	Bradley McBurney	4/22	Tammy Gauld
Jeanene Sykes	3/2	Ted Sykes	Walter Rodriguez	4/25	Carole Rodriguez
Melissa Matters	3/26	Kirk & Dianne Mueller	Reese Stout	4/30	Linda Stout
Colleen Brown	3/17	Keith & Lin Brown	Kevin Rickhoff	4/30	Nancy Rickhoff
Bailey Haney	3/28	Myra Kulick	Jacob Kaplan	4/1	Michael & Robyn
Alan Bartfai	3/8	John & Susan	Emily Mogg	4/16	Jeffrey & Tracey
Jeremy Silverstein	3/31	Mel & Jeniffer	Emily Mogg Grandchild	4/16	Gary & Sandy
Amin Moinzadeh	3/21	Azita Azarpira	Erica Thomas	4/13	Lisa Monsour
Sean Goodman	3/8	Steve Goodman			
Justice Sanchez	3/5	Manuel & Conception			
Kali Stanfiled Grandchild	3/30	Nika Johnson			
Alexander Gertsch	3/12	Shane & Dena Gertsch			



## *Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

### March

### April

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Sean McPhie	3/9	Fran McPhie	Sammy Thomas Grandchild	4/10	Kay & Dave Thomas
Brianna Smith	3/30	David & Laurie Millard	Michael Arvizu	4/22	Robert & Juanita
Nicholas Colley	3/28	Scott & Jade Colley	Justin Hakola	4/11	Cheryl Landreth
Aiden Lopez	3/26	Cesar & Jessica Lopez	Aurora Boehlert-Rubinfeld	4/10	Aron & April
Aiden Lopez Grandchild	3/26	Carmen Smith			
Monique Gutierrez	3/24	Irene Frenes			
Jake Vachon	3/25	Michelle Vachon			
Tommy Sziklay	3/10	Keith & Lise Parcels			
Sean Goodman	3/6	Steve Goodman			
Andy Benaudes	3/20	Jeanette Geiger			
Melissa VanDyke	3/27	Doris VanDyke			
Brian DeCaro	3/25	Mary Yancey			
Kali Stanfiled Grandchild	3/30	Nika Johnson			
Logan Ortega	3/6	Ellie & Amanda Ortega			

### Like Springtime

Like springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun around me. Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter of grief. Life has dared to go on around me and, as I recover from the insult of life's continuance, I readjust my focus to include healing and growth as possibly in my future.

Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I grew my wings, becoming a new person because of my loss.

