



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July-August 2023

Volume 24, 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, 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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MEETINGS

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

July 6, 2023
August 3, 2023

TIME: 7:00 PM

MEETING **Bethlehem SCV**

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

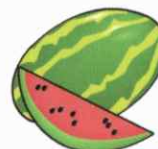
(Please note) This is our new location for meetings)



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)



Take Me To Where The Watermelon Grows

Take me to where the watermelon grows stretched out over years ago

Take me to where memories live, and sorrow never casts its shadow

Show me the grass where laughter thrives where little boys and girls dance

Take me to those rich fields of yesterday ripe with the memories

...basking in sunlight, waiting for me to smile as I remember my child.

~Alice J. Wisler

When one has tasted watermelon he knows what the angels eat.

~Mark Twain

Lovingly lifted from the July 2005 edition of Tributes, a monthly ezine offering comfort and hope for parents, siblings, and for those who care.

"Love is missing someone whenever you're apart, but somehow feeling warm inside because you're close in heart"

~Kay Knudsen



Independence Day

The fourth of July, Independence Day, our Nation's Birthday. Whatever you call it, we celebrate America's independence from England on July 4 each year.

As a nation, we have endured for 200+ years to become a significant independent and powerful force in the world. We were founded on the principles of equality and opportunity, and of rights and responsibilities. Several generations of men and women have defended our precious freedom with their lives.

As we celebrate this year, let's take a moment to remember those who paid the ultimate price for freedom—and to remember their families. It is sometimes easy to think only of the glory of their sacrifices, and to overlook the sacrifice of their families. War is never glorious, no matter how romantic created by Hollywood. War has casualties that go farther and deeper into the fabric of our nation that we may realize. Those who died are buried with fanfare, as befits a nation's fallen valiant. And their families learn to go on, just as we have, in spite of their loss.

But think for a moment of those who were declared missing in action, or who were prisoners of war. Their families must endure, often for years, and sometimes without an end to their pain and loss.

Remember all of our nation's fallen when you celebrate this year. Remember those ceremoniously laid to rest; remember those who were captured, imprisoned, even tortured; remember those whose fate remains unknown. And remember, too, the families of all them.

Death, no matter how noble, is never easy for those left behind.

We send our thanks to the veterans—living, dead, and missing—and their families.

*~Tom & Sondra Wrights
TCF Atlanta, GA*



The Tide Recedes

The tide recedes
But leaves behind
Bright seashells on the sand.
The sun goes down,
But gentle warmth
Still lingers on the land.
The music stops,
And yet it echoes on
In sweet refrains...
For every joy that passes,
Something beautiful remains.

~Author unknown



Summer

On the beach, cool breezes blow across the water, but the sun's rays feel warm upon my face. The ocean laps gently at the shore. I see one golden-haired lad with shovel and pail filling the moat around his carefully constructed sandcastle. I remember another golden-haired boy of years long past, wearing his bright red swimsuit, busy at his task and oblivious to all around him. Carefully, patiently, he fills and empties his pail again and again, molding and shaping the sand until he has it just right, until his perfect castle is completed. He runs to me, eyes aglow with pride, his dimpled smile stretched from ear to ear.

He dances around me. "Mommy, come see! It's finished! It's perfect!" We stand and admire it together. One bucket of sand turned upside down, a tiny trench encircling it. To us, it is a perfect castle. But then it happens. A wave, much bigger than the rest, washes away his labor of love. His green eyes fill, his lip quivers momentarily and then he squares his shoulders and announces, "Oh well, I'll begin again tomorrow."

And now recalling that other sunny summer day, My own eyes brimming with tears, my own lip quivers until I remember that I, too, can square my shoulders and "begin again tomorrow."

*~Betty Stevens
TCF Baltimore, MD*

Islands

Look for
the small,
quiet islands of peace
that arise
unexpectedly
from out of
the great sea
of your sorrow.



~Sascha Wagner

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

July 6 - Meeting , "Vacations"

August 3- Meeting, "We Need A Laugh" - Please share a funny story about your child/grandchild.



The Compassionate Friends Is for Sharing

Many people think that meetings of the Compassionate Friends consist of bereaved people who sit and cry most of the evening, but that is certainly a misconception. It is normal to shed tears as we talk about our child's death, and we would expect a newly bereaved person to cry. We understand that completely. But we don't just sit and cry. Would you believe that most of the time we spend in our sharing group circle we may enjoy hearing others' stories about their children, or even sharing our own? Our meetings are usually about our memories, our questions and also telling what has helped us to cope with it all. We all have ideas that we share with others in the hope that they may reach a point of "good memories" instead of bad memories of the child's death.

A support group should be very comforting and welcoming to those who attend and should always have non-judgmental members. We are less concerned at how the child died (even though we do care) and we are **more** concerned that we be there for the parents, siblings, or grandparents who need us. They have a desire to talk and share about their loved one. We want to let them lean on us in their time of pain, just as we had others before us who let us lean on them. It does come full circle.

~Jackie Wesley

TCF, East Central Indiana & Miami Whitewater

PEOPLE SAY

*you don't know what
you've got till it's gone.*

TRUTH IS,

*you knew what you had,
you just never thought
you'd lose it.*

- AUTHOR UNKNOWN



Thank you so very much for your generous Newsletter Renewal Donations, they are greatly appreciated!

Jaswir & Harvinder Viridi, in memory of Jeeveen



IMPORTANT!!! Newsletter Renewal Time

The date to return your newsletter renewal form was May 30 to continue receiving our newsletters, Birthday and Angel note cards. However, we have not received very many and have **extended that deadline**. We want to make sure everyone gets the opportunity to continue receiving it. Please return the form or call Diane at 661-373-5070 by **September 30 to remain on our data list** or this newsletter will definitely be your last. Thank you to all of our members who already have returned it or notified us.



Book Review

When Grief Comes: Finding Strength for Today and Hope for Tomorrow by Kirk H. Neely

To the reader from the author:

As much as I enjoy reading, I understand how difficult it is to read and cry at the same time...we can only dwell on grief and sorrow, death and dying, for a time, and then we need relief.

Please, be gentle with yourself. I want these pages to be a blessing to you, not a burden. You don't have to finish this book. It is written so that you can read a little, and stop, and then come back later. I have tried to write remembering how difficult it is to read when your heart is broken and your eyes are blurred with tears.

The book has several features that will help you take shortcuts through the deep forest of understanding your grief.

- The detailed table of contents will help you quickly find sections that are better suited to your grief at various points in your walk through bereavement.
- A list of comforting scriptures is included to help you quickly access passages that may help.

...this book is a book of encouragement. I have been through deep sorrow. I have experience the faithful, tender healing of God.



Broken Seashells - Broken Hearts

Recently while on a trip visiting my sister in Oregon I came across a lovely and heartfelt book entitled *My Beautiful Broken Shell* written by Carol Hamblet Adams and illustrated by one of my favorite seascape artists, D. Morgan.

The words of the tender reflections in this book resonated with my heart as I walked along the sandy shores of the Oregon coast collecting seashells. Adams shares the brokenness of her heart and spirit as she struggled through a difficult time. In her book, she describes her experience walking along the sandy seashore searching for perfect seashells to add to her collection.

As she gazes at the sea of broken shells, she comes to realize that the broken ones reflect her own broken heart. In each shell, Adams sees those who are hurting and who have lost loved ones; those who are frightened or alone; and those who are living with unfulfilled dreams. Like all of us, each shell in the vast sea is tremendously resilient after fighting so hard to keep from being totally crushed by the pounding surf. We, too, come to realize that it takes courage to remain on the shore after being "tossed by the storms of life and worn down by the sands of time despite the unrelenting pain and suffering in our hearts.

Like each of us, broken seashells represent our tears, deepest sorrows and pain from the loss of our precious child. The turbulent crashing waves of the sea followed by the calm waves teaches us about the true meaning of strength, courage and faith. The brokenness of each shell comes to remind us that when our hearts are shattered beyond belief, we can survive even the most horrific storm in our own lives.

As each beautiful broken shell doesn't pretend to be perfect or whole, it allows for its brokenness to be seen, knowing that within the center of the shell lays immense beauty. Broken seashells don't exist alone but are surrounded by a vast number of seashells, each broken in their own unique way. Like all of humanity, when you truly look around, you see that we are all wounded in one way or another.

As rare as it is to find a perfect shell in the midst of hundreds of shells lying on the beach, it's equally rare to find any one of us who has not experienced deep pain or sorrow. As the broken shells lie close to one another, we are reminded that we too, live in community with each other and when we draw upon the strength and courage of others it helps us through the most difficult times.

After reading this tender and heartfelt book, I walked the sandy Oregon shore, no longer in search for the perfect seashell for my collection but rather recognizing the strength, courage and beauty of all the broken shells that lay scattered along the shore. With each broken seashell I picked up and placed in my hand, I admired its own uniqueness and strength. It was through gazing at them, I was reminded of my own brokenness and the tremendous courage it has taken me to survive the most turbulent storm in my life.

Through my brokenness I have emerged stronger, more compassionate and loving and able to recognize and embrace my own internal beauty from that struggle. Like many others, I find my deepest peace and serenity by the seashore, mesmerized by the crashing waves followed by the slow, gentle retreat of the water back into the sea.

Next time you find yourself walking along the shore's edge, pick up a broken seashell that speaks to you and see yourself reflected in the broken edges. Recognize the strength of the shell to survive being tossed through the crashing waves just as your heart has survived and grown stronger after the most horrific and tumultuous storm.

*~Pamela Leonhardt, PsyD.
Reprinted from Denver Metro TCF
Newsletter, July 2005*

*Pamela is a Licensed Psychologist in private practice
in Boulder & bereaved mother to Angel Child
Michael 12/2-7/14*

**"You Can't Direct
the Wind,
But You Can Adjust
the Sails"**



I saw the above quote on a poster in our church, and it occurred to me that "grief work" is just that—adjusting the sails. When a child dies, our lives are changed forever. The wind changes direction.

When the direction of our life is so tragically changed, we have two choices. We can deal with our grief and adjust our sails, or we can deny our grief and drift helplessly and hopelessly out to sea.

In the beginning stages of grief, we merely "reef our sail" and go with the tide. That is not a bad idea. At that time we are in a state of shock and not capable of sound decisions. We need quite a bit of time to ride out the storm. But when the initial storm of intense pain begins to subside, we need to adjust our sails for our own survival.

You, and, only you, can make the decisions regarding the rest of your life. You may find fulfillment in reaching out to help others or becoming more active in your church or temple. Maybe you'll want to take as big a step as getting a job or returning to school. Perhaps you will make only subtle changes in your priorities. But if you have made the decision to have a direction instead of drifting, get started now! You may have several false starts before you are really on course again. That's OK Don't give up! The healing is in the trying. If you don't give up eventually you'll once again have "smooth sailing".

*~Marge Frankenberg
TCF Arlington Heights, IL*



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Jim & Suzy Kirk
In Loving Memory of their children:

**Justin
Knopf**
11/28 - 11/21



**Jamie
Knopf**
10/21 - 11/21



Myra Kulick
In Loving Memory of her granddaughter:

**Bailey
Haney**
3/28 - 7/11



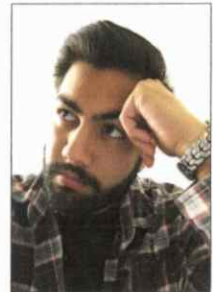
Robert & Juanita Arvizu
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Michael
Arvizu**
5/2 - 4/22



Jaswir & Harvinder Virdi
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Jeeven
Viridi**
10/23 - 6/12



Always

Always, may you feel
your loved one's presence in your heart.

Always, may you trust
that you are never far apart.

Always, may the precious joys
you shared shine strong and true.

Always, may each memory
bring peace and strength to you.

*When a parent remembers with all their heart,
the child will forever remain.*

*~Larry Warren
TCF, N. Georgia*

~Emily Matthews

"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			
Michael Lake	7/20	Marie Whitehead			



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
			Justice Sanchez	8/16	Manuel & Concepcion

Breakthrough

The tears of grief
Have washed away
The clouds of sorrow,
And vision now is clarified

I miss you still,
But see you new
In light of joy
And smile at your remembrance.

The love we shared
Still here to give
And to experience
The joy that comes from that, IS YOU!!

~Nel de Keijzer
Santa Barbara, Ca
From: "Food for the Soul"



*"When I grieve, when I stand by
others as they grieve,
even in the midst of seemingly
unbearable sorrow,
grief becomes a way to honor life—
a way to cling to every fleeting,
precious moment of joy.*

~Courtney Davis,
Nurse Practitioner