



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Sept-Oct 2023

Volume 24, No. 5



**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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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TCFUSA](http://www.facebook.com/TCFUSA)

#### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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[TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA](http://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 two meeting are:

**Sept. 7, 2023**

**Oct. 5, 2023**

**TIME: 7:00 PM**

**MEETING Bethlehem SCV**

**PLACE: 27265 Luther Dr. Room 5 (Second Driveway & through the gate)**

**Canyon Country, CA 91351**



#### 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)



### At First

At first

my very name was grief.

My eyes saw only grief,

my thoughts were grief.

And everything I touched

was turned to grief.

But now

I own the light of memories.

My eyes can see you,

and my thoughts can know you

for what you really are:

more than a young life lost,

more than a radiance

gone into the night.

Today you have become

a gift beyond my grief,

a treasure to my world...

though you have left

my would and me behind.

~by 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 messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."*

~Washington Irving



## School Days

Again a new school year is upon us, with it, brings on a new feeling of our loss. Even though Steven was long out of school, it still brings on the memories. So if you are dreading the sight of the yellow busses, know I am thinking of you!

The summer is mellowing as the days grow shorter  
the green on the trees seem to droop,  
and look a little duller.

The lazy days of summer take on a busy hustle  
as families shop for school,  
each gets a new book satchel.

Soon the quiet streets will be filled  
as children gather waiting  
the yellow bus to pick them up.

OH! The anticipating,  
But the same old lessons to be learned,  
to them seems so trivial.

New friends to make, and old ones too  
make their days fly past too soon.

But back at home a mother weeps  
for the child that this year misses.

No new clothes to buy,  
no more good-bye hugs and kisses.

For her this joyful time just brings on more heartache

Another school year starts,  
another milestone the child cannot make.

So she dries her eyes and tries to go on  
for the children that remain.

But each new start, breaks her heart  
it's hard to see the gain.

So if the yellow school bus brings  
on tears for you this year,  
don't forget your Compassionate Friends,  
we are always standing near.

~Shelia Simmons  
TCF, Atlanta



## Solace

In the smallest hour of your day,  
when you are alone  
with things remembered,  
questions unanswered  
and unfinished dreams,

then:

give to yourself

the gifts of your kindness

bring to yourself

the comforts of forgiveness,

share with yourself

the mercy of your love.

~Sascha

From: For You From Sascha



## We Need Each Other

Many living things need each other to survive. If you have ever seen a Colorado aspen tree, you may have noticed that it does not grow alone. Aspens are found in cluster, or groves. The reason is that the aspen sends up new shoots from the roots. In a small grove, all the trees may actually be connected by their roots.

Giant California redwood trees may tower 300 feet into the sky. It would seem that they would require extremely deep roots to anchor them against strong winds. But we're told that their roots are actually quite shallow - in order to capture as much surface water as possible. And they spread in all directions, intertwining with other redwoods. Locked together in this way, all trees support each other in wind and storms. Like the aspen, they never stand alone. They need each other to survive.

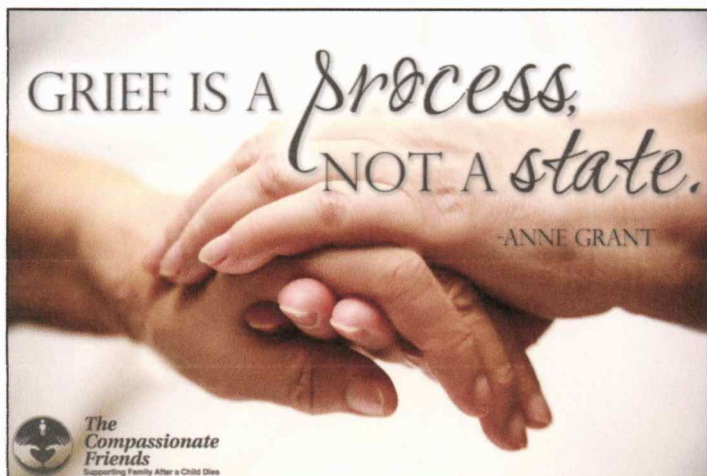
People, too, are connected by a system of roots. We are born to family and learn to make friends. We are not meant to survive long without others. And like the redwood, we need to hold one another up. When pounded by the sometimes vicious storms of life, we need others to support and sustain us.

Have you been going it alone? Maybe it's time to let someone else help hold you up for awhile. Or perhaps someone needs to hang on to you.

~From the book, "Riches of the Heart"

~By Steve Goodier

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# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

Sept 7 - Meeting, - "Where would they be now?"

Oct 5 - Meeting, - "What was your child's favorite holiday?"



World Suicide Prevention Day  
Creating Hope Through Action

September 10



Please light a candle near a window at 8PM on 9/10/23 to show your support for suicide prevention, to remember a lost loved one, and for survivors of suicide.

*"There is no suffering greater than that which drives people to suicide; Suicide defines the moment in which mental pain exceeds the human capacity to bear it. It represents the abandonment of hope."*

*~John T. Maltzberger, MD  
Past President of the American Ass. Of Suicidology*



PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS  
Awareness Month  
October

World Pregnancy & Infant Loss  
Remembrance Day  
October 15, 2023

In 1988, President Reagan declared October as the month to recognize the unique grief of bereaved parents in an effort to demonstrate support to the many families who have suffered such a tragic loss of a child to stillbirth, miscarriage, SIDS or any other cause at any point during pregnancy or infancy.

Please light a candle at 7pm local time to honor all babies gone too soon. Keep your candle lit for at least one hour to create a continuous "wave of light" across all time zones.



# Thank You

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

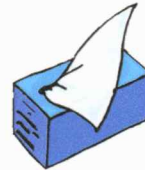
Robert & Juanita Arvizu, in memory of Michael  
Myra Kulick, in memory of Bailey  
Jim & Susan Kirk, in memory of Jamie & Justin



## 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:  
Christine Brown, mother of Donald



## Tissues, Tears & Treasures

A circle of chairs and boxes of tissues,  
A roomful of tears and emotional issues.  
Frightening at first, I did not want to enter  
into this strange group, and be in the center.

What I soon learned, as we sat side by side,  
We were bound by the love our child who died.  
Each shattered heart,  
desperately seeking a moment of peace,  
from the pain and weeping.

So many things different, and yet all the same,  
hearts lost in a fog of loss and pain.  
Those who have journeyed, much further than me,  
reached out in comfort, listened quietly.  
Each shattered heart spoke, and the tissues were passed,  
we never avoid speaking the past.

This circle of friends, have found a bond,  
and here I'm still known  
As "Tony's Mom."  
Slowly, I've found  
I can reach out to others  
who are newly bereaved, fathers and mothers.  
Strength I have found in this  
circle of chairs,  
to grieve and to heal  
and to show that we care.

*~Diane Barta  
TCF Portland, OR  
In Memory of my son, Tony*



## It's Bittersweet At Halloween

This month is the time for the little funny-looking creatures appearing at our doors for a trick or treat. Halloween was never my favorite day of the year. I think it was because I could never come up with those cute original costumes for my girls like every other mother managed to do every year. It seemed like after answering the door and seeing 200 original costumes I'd always think to myself, "Why didn't I think of that?" I'd tuck a few ideas away in my head for the next year, but when the time came to execute those ideas, I had tucked them so far away I couldn't remember them.

Once again were scrambling around the house on October 31 - trying to come up with ideas that both girls would be happy with. There was a difference of six years between our two daughters, & that wasn't the only difference. Kirsten's candy would last until Easter, and then we throw it out. JoAnn would eat her candy from house to house and come home with a full stomach and empty bag.

In the summer of 1978, Joann had her second open heart surgery. She died July 2, at age 6. When October rolled around, I dreaded seeing the little children coming to the door and remembering how JoAnn loved the candy and the enthusiasm of the evening.

As the evening wore on, I realized that the neighbors and people who knew us had, no doubt, told the children not to come to our house. My emotions were very mixed up. On the one hand I knew the parents were trying to protect us from the first holiday experience without JoAnn. It was very kind of them. On the other hand, it only reminded me of how different our home was now. When 9 o'clock came it was a relief to know the first event was over.

It has been many years now since JoAnn died. Halloween doesn't bother me, but we all know that the next day we turn the calendar, and November is here with the holidays around the corner. These are hard times whether you are a newly bereaved parent or have lived a number of years since your child died. We need not walk alone, but reach out to each other. One of the greatest blessings to me now is the gift of memory. I cherish the happy memories of JoAnn in all the seasons of the year.

~Cindy Holt  
TCF Jamestown, NY

*The passage of time alone does not cause our  
grief to end,  
But its softening touch helps us to survive.*

~Wayne Loder

## Trick Or Treat



The night is dim  
And the pumpkins grin  
At children on the porch.

The doorbell rings.  
"Trick or Treat" they sing  
My heart burns like a torch.

The Dracula's face  
And a princess in lace  
Are peering in at me.

How I'd love to ask  
"May I lift your mask?"  
And hiding, there you'd be!

You'd get such a kick  
From that silly trick,  
But disguised, you must stay.

In the wind that blows  
My heart still knows  
You're playing October charades.

~Katie Slier  
TCF Tulsa, OK

## Wearing a Mask



Halloween is a great time to pretend to be someone else. You can be mean and nasty even though you're usually a pretty nice person, or you can be scary when you usually are the one that gets scared. You can be strong and powerful or beautiful or mysterious or famous. You can pretend to be anything on Halloween.

It isn't fun, though, to try to always wear a mask. Sometimes, for a person who is grieving, it seems like you need to always pretend to be your old happy self. Your friends and others may want you to forget about your loss and go on as if nothing much has changed. But it is really hard to mask your true feelings all the time. It is much better for you if you can "take off your mask" and just be yourself sometimes. If you let your feelings out, then you are being honest with yourself and others. By taking off your mask and revealing your true self, you will be a much more REAL person. It's better to save mask for Halloween.

~From: Inside Fernside Newsletter  
A Center for Grieving Children  
Lovingly Lifted from TCF St. Paul Minnesota  
Aug/Sept /Oct 2013



# A Love Gift

Was Received From:

*Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer*  
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Peter  
Spencer**  
2/5 – 9/4



## 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.SCV@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!

## Letting Go

Tiny hands would hold on tight  
No matter what you'd do  
You took my hand so many times  
As through the years you grew

You reached for Mommy late at night  
When scary dreams awoke  
Seeking comfort and advice  
In every word I spoke

Decisions made in later years  
Would bring you home again  
A broken heart, A love renewed  
A quarrel with a friend

Wanting you to make your way  
Decisions all your own  
You'd need your hand held less and less  
I'd know you'd finally grown

Through the years I thought I knew  
And though I'd hate it so  
I hoped each time I held you tight  
It would help me to let you go

Now all I have are memories  
Of every hug and touch  
You've gone to be with God, my son  
And I miss you oh so much

Fate's reversed what I must do  
And that's the saddest part  
For now I have to let you go  
To keep you in my heart

~Donna Gerrior  
TCF Pasco County, FL  
In Memory of Rob



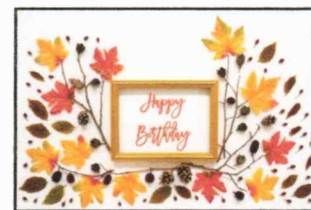
## Memories

Memories are flowers growing in the heart  
Flowers picked on happy days  
That time arranges in bouquets  
To warm the heart in tender ways  
By feelings they impart  
Memories are pictures taken through the years,  
Pictures of a smiling face.  
A happy time, a favorite place...  
These pleasures time cannot erase.  
They are kept as souvenirs.

~Laura Rogers  
TCF Northfield, NJ

# "Forever In Our Hearts"

## Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



*Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays*

### September

### October

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Vincent Lizarr	9/6	Ida Hahlbech	Jamie Knopf	10/21	Jim & Susan Kirk
Brian Berry	9/16	Steve Berry	Brianna Millard Smith	10/6	David & Laurie Millard
Christopher Rodriguez	9/22	Barbara Rawson	Aiden Lopez	10/27	Cesar & Jessica
Matthew Weiss	9/21	William Weiss	Aiden Lopez (Grandchild)	10/27	Carmen Smith
Miles Davis	9/01	Michele Davis	Travis Marton	10/15	Andrew & Ricki Marton
Maddox Melton	9/2	Ceara Melton	Tommy Sziklay	10/21	Keith & Lise Parcels
Cameron Morey	9/21	Dennis & Linda Morey	Jake Vachon	10/31	Michelle Vachon
Melissa VanDyke	9/16	Doris Van Dyke	Julian Burns	10/13	Robert Burns
			Jeeven Viridi	10/23	Jaswir & Harvinder



## *Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

### September

### October

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Jeffrey Costin	9/3	Richard & Carol Costin	Michelle Briones	10/11	Bert & Diane Briones
Michael Rodriguez (Sibling)	9/19	Debbie DiCorrado	Vincent Lizarr	10/5	Ida Hahlbech
Cyrena Becerra	9/5	Mona Gonzalez	Greg Hilton	10/2	Kathy Hilton
Peter Spencer	9/4	Bobbie Mathers	Sage Gallegos	10/17	Alex & Anita Gallegos
Maddox Melton	9/3	Ceara Melton	Sarah Crittenden	10/20	Steve & Jeanne Crittenden
Michael Lake	9/18	Marie Whitehead	Michael Leone	10/5	Mariacristina Leone
Erica Thomas	9/27	Lisa Monsour			



## Bittersweet Memories



One of the most precious things to a parent who has lost a child is the memories. Without them, it would be as if their child never was. Without them, it is so bittersweet that it can make a parent laugh and cry, rejoice and anguish, touch the sweetness to the lips and taste the salt from the tears.

Memories keep the heart from crushing under the weight of sorrow. They give a parent the chance to be with their child again. They can walk through their memories like they were a movie. When the memories are so vivid, you can almost feel them. It is so bittersweet when the reality comes and you realize it is just a memory, a thought, and you are reminded of what you have lost.

If you asked a parent if they would give up the memories so they did not have to feel the pain of knowing their child is gone, they would tell you no. As painful as it may be, not having the memories or feeling their presence, is just as unbearable as losing them.

There is no happy place to go to, but there is a place to be with your child. You know before you step into that realm that it will be painful, but you know that it will be joyful too.

So as we let the memories take us to a time that our child was safe with us, just rest a while until it is time to go and the next time try not to think of what is gone but what is still in your heart and will always be.

*~Vickie Van Antwerp*

*TCF, "We Need Not Walk Alone", Vol. 34, No 1/2*