



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Nov-Dec 2023

Volume 24, 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, 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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#### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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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:

**Nov. 2, 2023**

**Dec. 7, 2023**

**Dec. 10, 2023 - Candle Lighting Program**

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)



## Wintersong

Season of lights, season of love and peace  
Season of shadow, season of memories  
Season of warmth and joy,  
season of secret tears:

Give us the courage to laugh again

Give us the vision to hope again

Give us the power to love again

For all our new seasons  
And all our new years.

~Sascha Wagner  
"Wintersun"

*May your holidays be filled  
with reasons to be thankful.  
Having loved and been loved is  
perhaps the most wondrous  
reasons of all.*





## When Words Become Gifts

On Thanksgiving Day, 1994, two of my three young adult sons, Erik and David were killed in a freak car accident. Years after the accident my husband and I were at David's college alma mater for a holiday event. I was in the dessert line when a woman came up to me and said, "I saw your name tag - are you David Aase's mom?" After doing a double take (it had been some time since I had been asked what used to be a rather common question), I replied with much appreciation, "Yes, I am!" With those three, almost magical, words this person gave me five gifts.

Her first gift was saying David's name. Instead of just thinking to herself, Hmmm, I bet that's David Aasen's mom but I better not say anything, she said something. Her second gift was sharing a story with me about how her daughter, a classmate of David's, still treasures the friendship she and David shared. Acknowledging that I'm still a mom was her all-important third gift. While my sons' deaths have resulted in my becoming a bereaved mother, death cannot take away the fact that I am, and always will be, Erik and David's mom.

The fourth gift was permission to share a bit of my grief journey with her. Since their deaths, I explained, there haven't been any truly carefree feeling-on-top-of-the-world days, but taking each day as it comes has been the most "doable" way for me to go on. Her questions and manner did not make me feel obligated to cover up my grief and was the fifth gift. I felt valued for my honesty and my integrity remained intact.

The warmth of those five gifts has lingered on in my heart and has comforted me. As I reflect on the experience, I marvel at how just a few simple words had such an impact. I have come to the conclusion that most bereaved parents want nothing more than the opportunity to talk comfortably with others about their children. Just being able to share stories about our sons and daughters in a safe place, along with the permission to mourn in our own way and for as long as we need to, even for a lifetime, is what matters most to us.

The real treasure comes when others introduce our children's names and stories into an everyday conversation. Knowing our sons and daughters are remembered and live on in the hearts and lives of others is a measure of the meaningful legacy that our sons and daughters have left to us and to the world.

*~Nita Aasen*

*In memory of my sons, Erik & David  
St. Peter, MN*

*Lovingly lifted from: TCF South Suburban,  
Evergreen Park, IL*

*"You are the music in my soul and  
you are with me anytime,  
all the time, no matter what the season!!*

*~Darcie Sims*



## I Never Believed...

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day he died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you, too, will come to understand that life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even joy can touch your life once more.

*~Dan Hackett  
TCF, Hingham, MA*



## Another Thanksgiving

Another Thanksgiving is upon us... the 3rd without Steven. I still find myself just wanting the Holidays to be over in a hurry, so many memories come rushing into just overwhelm me. A time that should be filled with Happy moments spent with family and friends, has become a day to just somehow to get through. And I embrace each and every one of you out there that knows what I am speaking of. So what do I find to be thank for?

I am thankful for a sound mind to be able  
to recall all those wonderful memories.

I am thankful for the past, which gave me these memories.

I am thankful I live in a country where

I am able to express my right to be thankful.

I am thankful for each and every one of you out there  
who help strengthen me and help me to go on.

And I am thankful for the pain...

for you see without the pain there would have been  
no love...

And for that love I am eternally Thankful.

I wish for you all a warm peace filled holiday,  
as the tears fall and mingle with the smiles,  
know that as long as we have each other we will make it.

*~Sheila Simmons  
In Memory of her son Steven  
3/24 - 10/19*



# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**November 2 - Meeting, Make Luminaries** (see below)  
Please join us as we decorate a luminary for our Candle Lighting Program

**November 26** - Deadline to send in picture for video

**December 7 - Meeting, "The Holidays: What's Right for You?"**

**December 10** - Candle Lighting Program 6:30PM



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](mailto:AL5renolds@twc.com) by **November 26**.



## Food Drive

The Bethlehem SCV Church where we have our meetings and where our Candle Lighting program will be held again this year is collecting 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 again tremendously this year with our program. Let's show our appreciation by helping them in their food collection this holiday season!

*In your gathering of memoires,  
invite your courage to remember everything.  
~Sascha Wagner*



## 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.

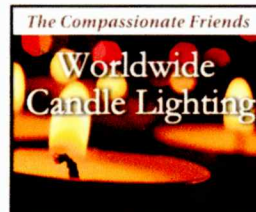
New to our chapter are:

Stephanie Sanchez, mother of Ezequiel

Clyde Baxter, father of Izaiah

Renee Field, mother of Jason

Lex & Emily, parents of Christian & Zayne



## 22nd Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

**December 10 @ 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 10 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"*





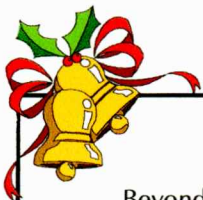
## Holiday Reflections

Christmas and Hanukkah are upon us once more. December is an emotion-laden month for most adults. We pause and ponder the meaning of "peace on earth, good will toward men." We touch base with our beliefs, rituals, traditions and treasured memories. In passing on this heritage to our children, we are like conduits connecting past, present and future. It is a bit of immortality, a sense of tradition flowing from generation to generation.

It is these very essence of the holidays that stabs at the heart of bereaved parents. Our children represent the future. We may wonder what is the point of future. We may wonder what is the point of tradition with so many pieces of the future dead. Each grieving parent must struggle to answer a framework for the holiday season. Since we cannot ignore it or make it go away, we can deal with the situation by making specific plans with our families. We can assess priorities. We can make changes. We can decide which traditions to uphold and which to set aside this year. We can choose to acknowledge openly to our children our grief. We can think about some very special gifts.

To ourselves, we can grant the gift of acceptance by realizing that our grief is a necessary healing process. To our families, we can extend the gift of empathy by remembering that they too, hurt. To our missing children, we can bestow the gift of homage by determining to work through grief so that we may live life to the fullest.

*~Candy McLaughlin  
TCF, Minneapolis, MN*



## Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the twinkling lights, the red and green candles, the poignant aroma of evergreen...Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and stars and beloved carols...Beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking...Beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas...Beyond all of these...there is Hope.

Hope...It is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you I would wish hope, peace, compassion, love, sympathy, understanding, sharing and listening.

In the sharing of our grief with one another and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and learn all of these gifts.

*~TCF, Wabash Valley Chapter*

## Hanukah

Hanukah  
is our  
Festival of Lights.



Let your light shine,  
so that their light  
may shine.

*~Sascha Wagner*



## Christmas Past

I am spending Christmas in the past this year  
A time of laughter and good cheer  
When the kids where all gathered round the tree with  
delight  
And my heart took a picture, of this most perfect night.

A warm fire and some eggnog, hugs, and big smiles  
My heart and mind race back through time and miles.  
The laughter and fun we all shared is still there  
The Christmas of the present is just too bare.

So I choose Christmas of past gone years  
The ones that were not filled with heartache and tears.  
And if you care to join me all you have to do  
Is gently close your eyes, remember a time,  
and in a second you will be there too.

Remember the love from the past is still here  
It does not leave us, and is always near.  
So no matter where you spend Christmas this year  
Be filled with the love, of the past gone years.

*~Sheila Simmons  
In Memory of her son,  
Steve Simons 3/70 - 10/99  
Lovingly lifted from: [www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)*



*May your holiday season be filled  
with moments of peace  
and special memoires of the past.*

*~unknown*

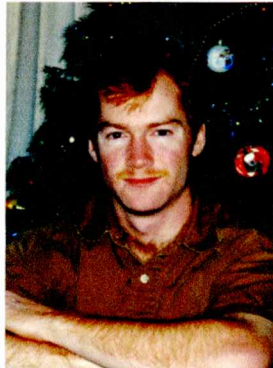


# A Love Gift

Was Received From:

*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.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!



## Memories

When you need to...  
Reach deep inside and take one of your precious memories.  
Wipe away the cobwebs, lay it out in front of you and let the sunshine and the sounds engulf you.  
Revel in the experience of it...  
Re-live each precious moment, be overwhelmed by them and taste the wonderful sweet tears that are their gift.  
When your needs have been almost satisfied pause for one more second then gently fold it back up, give it a big hug and a tender kiss and return the treasure to where you found it.  
Then to make the experience complete, find someone special and share the feelings with them...  
For surely something as wonderful as this is meant to be shared.  
Don't be afraid of using them - that's what memories are for.  
You will never lose them...  
for as certain as the sun will rise tomorrow,  
Love once attained is never lost.

~Steve Channing  
Lovingly Lifted from:  
"Linked Together" Newsletters of  
The Compassionate Friends  
Atlanta Chapters  
May/June 2002  
[www.tcfatlanta.org](http://www.tcfatlanta.org)

## Because

"Because I cannot hold you in my arms,  
I will envelope you in my heart.  
Because I cannot hear your song,  
I will whisper your love into the world.  
Because I cannot gaze into your eyes,  
I will tender your vision of compassion where it's most needed.  
In every moment without you,  
I will do all I can to grace others with the beauty in your wake."

~Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

# *"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		Eric Spencer	12/29	Bobbie Mathers
Michael Kelly	11/17	Kathy Kelly		Michael Leone	12/6	Mariacristina Leone
Justin Hakola	11/9	Cheryl Landreth		Andro Barsoum	12/10	Odette Awad
				Logan Ortega	12/22	Ellie & Amanda
				Danny Sullivan	12/10	Terasa Papa



### *Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

#### November

#### December

Name	Date	Member		Name	Date	Member
Darren Bullock	11/19	Carol Lock		Whitney Moore	12/12	Beth Moore
Eric Spencer	11/2	Bobbie Mathers		Jacob Kaplan	12/24	Michael & Robyn
Justin Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk		Kevin Rickhoff	12/09	Nancy Rickhoff
Jamie Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk		Julian Burns	12/13	Robert Burns
Melissa Mueller Matters	11/3	Kirk & Dianne		Joshua Mathews	12/2	Priscilla DiBlasio
Colleen Brown	11/3	Keith & Lin Brown		Sean Tessier	12/5	Patricia Vassallo
Kevin Petersen	11/18	Cheryl Petersen				
Andro Barsoum	11/04	Odette Awad				
Jax Markley	11/06	Matt & Daisy				
Christian Malan	11/23	Lex & Emily				
Jason Fields	11/21	Renee Fields				



## *The Light Within*

Each of us carries a light within, though often it seems shrouded in darkness. But it is there - that spark causes us to respond to love, care, beauty and need in the world. Even when we are sad. Perhaps, indeed, when we are sad we react with even more intensity to the gifts and opportunities life offers.

But can we mobilize ourselves to walk, made courageous by the light within? Sometimes, especially when we are grieving, we stand back, fearful. Feeling immobilized, we want someone else to take the initiative.

We have more power than we give ourselves credit for. We will learn the extent of that power only by claiming it and stepping forth. Are we afraid of failure? What have we to fear that can compare with what we have already lost?

So let's take a deep breath and let the sense of that light within burn steady. Then let's move on into our lives imagining that the one we have lost is helping fan that flame and is cheering us on. Conscious of my own light and power, I move on into my life.

*~Daily message from Healing After Loss  
By Martha Whitmore Hickman*