



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Jan-Feb 2024

Volume 25, No. 1



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.

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TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA

Website: 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:

Jan. 4, 2024

Feb. 1, 2024

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:

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Joanne Campos (Remembrance Secretary)

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Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)



Love and Hope

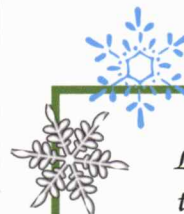
On a cold winter day the sun went out
Grief walked in to stay
I turned away from the unwanted guest
And bid him be on his way

Grief was merciless, he brought his friends...
Loneliness, Fear, and Despair.
They walk these rooms unceasingly
In the somber cloaks they wear.

Every so often now,
Love pays a call
She always has Hope by her side
I welcome Love as well as Hope
For I thought surely they had died.

Love counsels Grief in a most gentle way
Bids him be still for a while
Then Love walks with me through memory's hall
And for a time...I can smile.

~Kerry Marston
TCF Grand Junction, CO



*Like the snowflakes that herald
the season, each child is unique.
If their time with us is brief,
the memory of their beauty lasts forever...*

~Author Unknown



Grief and Stress

Despite the talk about the "stages of grief," there's no real guide to mourning. Each person reacts to loss in his or her own way. Still, there is one universal component of grief: Almost every loss, no matter how expected, will be accompanied by stress and disorientation. In the words of a report from the National Mental Health Association, "The loss of a loved one is life's most stressful event."



Stress Relief: Yoga, Meditation, and Other Relaxation Techniques

Exercise is good for the mind, not just the body. Exercise can help with stress relief because it provides a way for the body to release tension and pent-up frustration. The Eastern practices of Yoga and Tai Chi are effective stress-reducing forms of exercise.

Whenever we encounter a stressful event, our bodies undergo a series of hormonal and biochemical changes that put us in "alarm mode." Our heart rate increases, adrenaline rushes through our blood stream, and our digestive and immune systems temporarily shut down. If the stressors continue and we stay on high alert for a prolonged period of time, we experience exhaustion and burn out. None of us can avoid stress, but we can return to a state of balance and regulation through a variety of means, including deep breathing, meditation, yoga, and exercise. These activities provide calming and relaxing sensory input for stress relief and can be selected according to lifestyle and preference.

How do breathing exercises relieve stress?

When you're facing a stressful situation, you can reduce your stress simply by deep breathing. Deep breathing involves not only the lungs but also the abdomen. To experience abdominal breathing, sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach. Inhale through your nose and the hand on your stomach should begin to rise. Your other hand should move very little. Exhale as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles.

Breathing techniques can be practiced almost anywhere and can be combined with other relaxation exercises, such as aromatherapy and music. All you really need is 10 minutes a day and a place to stretch out.

*~Lovingly Lifted from:
TCF South Suburban,
Evergreen Park, IL
www.tcfchicago.org*

*Happiness sneaks through a door that
you didn't know you left open.*

~John Barrymore



New Year Goals

The holidays are over and I bet you're glad about that. You did make it through, though and by now maybe some of the stress of that powerful time has left you. Next year you will find you learned from this year, no matter how many years it has been and I hope it will be easier for you, too, in the years ahead. If you made New Year's resolutions, I hope they included:

- ♡ To try to take it one day at a time.
- ♡ To forgive yourself for whatever it is you feel you did wrong.
- ♡ To figure out ways to resolve your anger so you can let go of it.
- ♡ To concentrate on and value what you have left as much as what you have lost.
- ♡ To risk reinvestment in life.
- ♡ To let those you value, know how important they are to you.

These are important steps forward. Try to be good to yourself in the New Year.

*~Mary Cleckly
BP/USA*

www.bereavedparentsusa.org



Listen

A new year does arrive again at midnight.
Your mind is heavy with remembering.
Your heart must ache before another chance to
quarrel with the emptiness of time.

Yes, New Year does walk in again at midnight.
And can you hear it speak of comfort waiting,
of open doors and brighter rooms to enter...
of deeper meaning and of greater hope?

The new year will arrive and begs you:
LISTEN

~Sascha Wagner

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

Jan 4 - Meeting, Guest Speaker, Roxy Lofstrand
She will be leading us in some easy yoga, mediation and breathing techniques. See her bio below. You won't want to miss this meeting!

Feb 1 - Meeting, "A Broken Heart Full Of Memories"

Guest Speaker

JANUARY 4TH - MEETING

Hi my name is Roxy Lofstrand and I have been taking yoga on and off since college and teaching since 2017 at different establishments around Santa Clarita. At the local Senior Center, I have been teaching since 2017, Serenity Hot Yoga (was Hot Yoga before 2020) since 2016, Total Woman 2017-2020, and Golds Gym (currently). I have also taught free classes in the park and mini retreats to school educators. On occasion, I have also taught chair yoga and kids yoga.

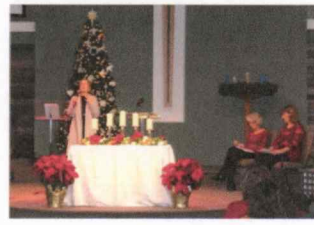
I love the healing energy that practicing yoga provides, not just for yourself but also for others. We are different every day and need different things and yoga helps us become more aware of recognizing those needs and attending to them. Finding peace within our mind, body and spirit is what yoga is all about and it is definitely a practice worth taking the time to do. Yoga is not just poses, it is also breathing, mediating, and so much more. I am excited to meet you and spend some time with you on January 4th where we will look at some of the healing aspects of yoga and you can hopefully take away a part of the practice that resonates with you!



Photo Buttons

Just a reminder! We take orders at each meeting for photo buttons or you can send it by email, or regular mail. We will photo copy your child, grandchild or sibling's picture and make 3" buttons for \$3.00 each.

Why not order an extra button to keep at our meeting place, so you will always have one there. Also, don't forget to order some for you family and friends. Contact Jeanne at 661-478-2948 or joriesgirl56@gmail.com



22nd Annual Candle Light Remembrance Program

On Sunday, December 10th our chapter held its annual candle lighting program indoors in the Worship area of Bethlehem SCV, the church where we hold our meetings.

We had almost 40 beautifully embellished luminaries lining the walkway into our program. The bags glowed with our beloved children, siblings, and grandchildren's faces and their names as they greeted us to our special night of remembrance.



We gathered together in this beautifully decorated area, many their first time at attending along with many long time familiar faces. We came together in friendship and love to celebrate and remember our children, grandchildren, and siblings, when most are celebrating the holidays. As we listened to the poems and songs we lit our candles and watched our loved ones faces float across the screen, you could hear weeping and see glistening tears shimmering down our cheeks. But those tears signify the forever love we hold deep within our hearts. Whether they lived three score and ten or never tasted earths air they are ours, now and forever. No longer being with us the way we want does not lessen our love for them in our hearts.

It is our hope that this program for just a short time helped you feel the warmth of your loved one's memories and presence in your heart and that you were given some small measure of peace for the holidays.

Thank you to Jeff & Tracey Mogg, Kathy Hilton, Jeanne Crittenden, Tom Renolds, Bert Briones, the family of Aiden Lopez, Lea Carranza, Andy Goldsmith and anyone else who lent a hand to help put this evening on. If you weren't able to attend, we hope you were able to light a candle from home, so that..."their light may always shine."

~Alice Renolds, Editor



"The Compassionate Friends is about transforming the pain of grief into the elixir of hope. It takes people out of the isolation society imposes on the bereaved and lets them express their grief naturally. With the shedding of tears, healing comes. And the newly bereaved get to see people who have survived and are learning to live and love again."

~Simon Stephens,
Founder of The Compassionate Friends



Valentine's Day Blues and Other Colors

Valentine's Day, a day when love is officially celebrated in the United States, can be a day of increased pain and sadness for the bereaved. Many individuals report images of their heart being shattered or smashed as they describe the pain their loss has created. They find it hard to assemble the pieces back into the beautiful wholeness they once knew.

Others feel frozen and disconnected from those they love. Their feelings no longer flow freely, and they carry a sense of emotional isolation. It is hard to keep one's heart open when it has been hurt and traumatized by a loss, and yet staying open to the sources of love in your life and remaining a source of love for others is one of the best paths of healing.

One way of turning the difficulty of Valentine's Day around is to re-label it as a time of opening the heart. Take some time to identify your feelings and openly accept them. It is likely that a variety of feelings are crowding together, making it hard to feel much of anything. Sometimes making a list of the different feelings you are aware of can help to sort them out. Noticing what problems the negative feelings stem from and thinking of possible solutions may help to release some of the worries and negative emotions that are present.

Focusing on the greatest source of love currently in your life is another positive way to reconnect with loving feelings. The source could be anyone or anything: a memory, a poem, a painting, an old letter, and spiritual or religious writings, whatever has positive meaning to you. Try relaxing and letting the positive feelings that this inspiration creates fill your mind.

Connecting with friends and family can be helpful too. Send a card to someone whom you care about. Call a friend or relative. Go out for lunch or dinner. Let those close to you know that you love them even if it's been hard to show it recently. Reach out to someone who might need attention.

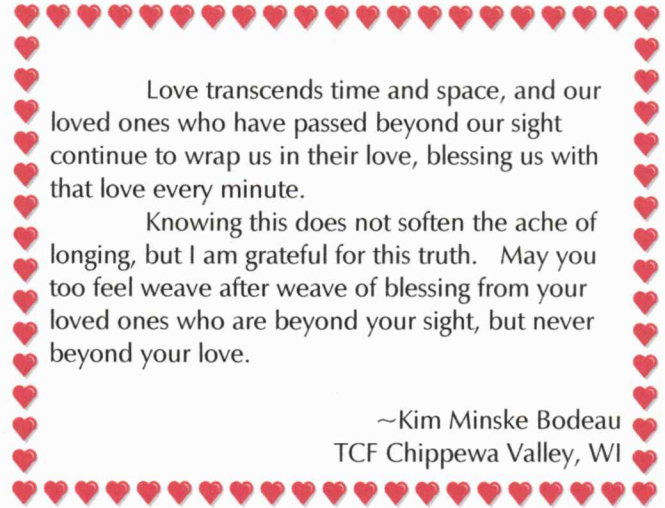
Some people find it comforting to write a note to the person they have lost, and let the person know how they are feeling and what they are doing. Others might honor the person they have lost with a ceremony in their honor.

If Valentine's Day feels too big to handle, it may be a good time to find a counselor or therapist who can help you through it. Connecting with a support group of other bereaved people may be a great way to open up in a community who understands your experience and is able to offer support.

While the blues might well be a realistic part of your Valentine's experience, taking steps to reconnect with your feelings and with others will allow other colors to flow in, and keep open a path of healing

~Laura Slap-Shelton, Psy.D.
www.griefandrenewal.com

Lovingly Lifted From TCF South Suburban Chapter
Evergreen, IL



Love transcends time and space, and our loved ones who have passed beyond our sight continue to wrap us in their love, blessing us with that love every minute.

Knowing this does not soften the ache of longing, but I am grateful for this truth. May you too feel weaved after weaved of blessing from your loved ones who are beyond your sight, but never beyond your love.

~Kim Minske Bodeau
TCF Chippewa Valley, WI



I'm There Inside Your Heart

Right now I'm in a different place
And though we seem far apart,
I'm closer than I ever was...
I'm there inside your heart.

I'm with you when you greet each day
And while the sun shines bright,
I'm there to share the sunsets, too...
I'm with you every night.

I'm with you when the times are good
To share a laugh or two,
And if a tear should start to fall
I'll still be there for you.

And when the day arrives
That we no longer are apart,
I'll smile and hold you close to me...
Forever in my heart.

Author unknown
Lovingly Lifted from:
TCF Atlanta online E-Newsletter

*Time does not really heal a broken heart,
it only teaches a person
how to live with it.*

~unknown



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Barbara Rawson
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Christopher
Rodriguez**
9/22 - 6/13



Tom & Alice Renolds
In Loving Memory of their sons:

Tim Renolds
3/17 - 2/17



Danny Renolds
6/22 - 2/17

Forever In Our Hearts

Elaine McAlpine
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Daniel
McAlpine**
6/27 - 8/29



Bobbie & Dan Spencer
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Peter
Spencer**
2/5 - 9/4



Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Eric
Rodriguez**
8/11 - 1/20



*Like snowflakes,
your words fall silent.
But my heart still
hears your voice.*

~Angie Weiland-Crosby

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays



January

February

Name	Date	Member		Name	Date	Member
Nigel Peddie	1/19	Bruce Peddie		Sammy Thomas	2/1	Dave & Kay Thomas
				Edward Evans	2/28	Barbara Evans
				Peter Spencer	2/5	Bobbie Mathers
				Brian DeCaro	2/27	Mary Yancey
				Izaiah Baxter	2/14	Clyde Baxter
				Zanyne Malan	2/24	Lex & Emily Malan
				Ezequie Sanchez	2/20	Stephanie Sanchez



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

January

February

Name	Date	Member		Name	Date	Member
Oliva Kares	1/12	Mike Kares		Daniel Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Edward Evans	1/2	Barbara Evans		Timothy Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Travis Marton	1/1	Andrew & Ricki Marton		Jeanene Sykes	2/5	Ted Sykes
Eric Rodriguez	1/20	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez		Nigel Peddie	2/1	Bruce Peddie
Mindy Siefert	1/25	Debbie Gardner		Reese Stout	2/10	Linda Stout
Emily Mogg	1/30	Jeff & Tracey Mogg		Troy Covert	2/24	Melanie Miller
Emily Mogg Grandchild	1/30	Gary & Sandy Johnson		Danny Sullivan	2/10	Terasa Papa
Jason Fields	1/16	Renne Fields				

Sometimes

Sometimes, something clicks,
And with a tear
Remembrance of the pain
And the loneliness
Flood the heart.

Sometimes, something clicks
And with a smile
Remembrance of the love
And the laughter
Flood the senses.

And there are times
When nothing clicks at all
And voices echoes

Through the emptiness
And numbness
Never finding the person
Who used to fill that space

And sometimes
The most special times of all,
A feeling ripples through your
Body, heart, and soul
That tells you
That person never left you
And he's right there with you
Through it all.

*~Kirsten Hansen, Bereaved Sibling
Kentfield, Canada
Lovingly Lifted from TCF/SWMB
Oct-Dec 2005 Lifetime*

Grieving is a journey that teaches us how to love in a new way now that our loved one is no longer with us. Consciously remembering those who have died is the key that opens the hearts, that allows us to love them in new ways.

~ Tom Attig