



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May-June 2024

Volume 25, No. 3



**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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#### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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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 meetings are:

**May 2, 2024**

**June 6, 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:

Diane Briones (Leader) 661-373-5070

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Linda Stout (Facebook Manager)

Joanne Campos (Remembrance Secretary)

Steve Crittenden (Webmaster)

Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)

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#### Endowment

Hope gives us vision for regaining the tenderness of memories.

Hope carries us through to survival and healing.

Hope offers us courage for acceptance and overcoming. Hope gives us new spirit and new laughter.

Hope is among the greatest gifts to be found in time of sorrow. But hope can not restore what is lost to death. Hope can only go forward and make us new.

Give space to hope in your life.

~Sasha Wagner  
From "Winterson"

*"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 heart, that allows us to love them in new ways."*

~Tom Attig  
From: *The Heart of Grief*



## Bent But Not Broken

To the Mother who has lost her only child, or has no surviving children, the thought of Mother's Day sends a stabbing pain that only the ones of us who are in this situation can understand. We begin to notice Mother's Day cards slipped in right after Valentine's Day along with the Easter cards. Even before Easter the TV advertising starts. We try to blot this all out but our subconscious keeps reminding us, the day is coming closer.

For the first two years we celebrated Mother's Day for my mother and sister very quietly. The third year after my daughter Shawna's death, we decided to go to a local restaurant featuring a nice buffet. We arrived early hoping to avoid the crowd. A very flustered hostess greeted us and found a table for us. The tables had been pushed close together to accommodate more people. It was already becoming very crowded. She asked the question, "How many Mothers?" It was then we noticed the flowers she was carrying. Someone managed to stammer out, three- three-Mothers. She handed us each a flower, while glancing around to find a table for the next group of people. She didn't notice the one she handed me was pretty battered.

My sister wanted to give me hers or get another. "No, it's Ok," I said. The stem was bent, but not broken completely. A wilted tired flower was hanging from the stem. I brought it home and propped it up in a glass of water to revive it. You see, I could identify with that flower.

As a Mother without a child, I have felt so bruised. Somehow through all the pain, tears, and loneliness, like the flower, I have been bent but never quite broken.

*~Donna Frechec,  
TCF, Enid Chapter*

## The Significance of Mother's Day

I don't think I really appreciated the significance of Mother's Day until I myself became one. My life would never be the same and the death of my only child did not alter the fact that I am still a mother. I still have that intense feeling of love for my child, a love greater than any I had know before. So as Mother's Day approaches, a day on which we recognize the love and pride of motherhood, I too want to be remembered as a mother.

*~Ginny Smith  
TCF Charlottesville, VA*

*Happy  
Mother's Day*

## Butterfly



Butterflies are beautiful for us to see,  
And come in many varieties,  
With brilliant colors and patterned wings,  
They bring us joy and make our hearts sing.

On a deeper level they teach us about faith,  
And accepting changes that we must make,  
The butterfly is the result of transformation,  
A new and wonderful creation.

From egg to caterpillar to butterfly,  
They break free and take to the sky,  
Uplifting messengers of courage and hope,  
Especially in times we find it hard to cope.

Lovely symbols of what's possible for us too,  
The metamorphosis for me and for you,  
Give me courage and faith so that I may soar,  
With love and happiness in life once more.



*C.A Stevenson, 2009  
Lovingly Lifted from National TCF  
We Need Not Walk Alone, Summer 2009*



## A Bereaved Mother

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who stands at a grave wondering how she is going to live the rest of her live without this child.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who thinks she will spend the rest of her life with this horrendous feeling inside.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who learns she can think again of happy moments instead of the horror that surrounds the child's death.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who has to start new traditions in her family because the old ones no longer work.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who wishes they would take Mother's Day out of the calendar.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who has to learn to accept the loss of her beloved child and uses what she has learned to help others.

**A Bereaved Mother** is someone who can again learn to smile, look forward to the future and be thankful her Compassionate Friends were there when she needed them.

*~Zel Hester  
TCF Atlanta, GA*

# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**May 2** - Meeting, "Mother's Day"- How to cope with the day.

**June 6** - Meeting, "Father's Day" - What will help you through this day?

## Welcome to TCF

Did you walk through these doors  
Scared and desperate for hope  
Are you here for the first time  
Struggling to find ways to cope

Have you been here before  
And found that sliver light  
The one that seemed impossible  
In the darkness of grief's night

Have you finally found peace  
From a place deep within  
Do you come to share their love  
From where it has always been

Here we wish to listen  
To the stories held so dear  
We want to share the laughter  
And the hidden, darkest fear

We want to see the pictures  
Here their name spoken aloud  
We want to hear the memories  
The sad, funny and the proud

Whatever your reason  
Whatever brought you here  
We are a special kind of family  
One that understands each tear

There is one profound truth  
That we compassionately live by  
Love lives on forever and ever  
Love did not and will never die

In a world gone so chaotic  
Where stability has been thrown  
Know that here among all of us  
You need never walk alone.

*~Tanya Lord  
National TCF, We Need Not Walk Alone  
Autumn/Winter 2015*

## 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:

Valerie Pereira, mother of Randy

Patrice Madrigal, mother of Amanda

Veronica Cervantes, mother of Gusevo



Thank you to those who donate anonymously to our donation basket at our monthly meetings. Your donations and generosity are greatly appreciated and truly don't go unnoticed! **Please remember, you can also donate a Love Gift to remember your child to be put in our newsletter, see page 5 for details. These two sources of donations are what take care of all our chapter's expenses!**



## Book Review

"After The Darkest Hour, The Sun Will Shine Again": A Parent's Guide To Coping With The Loss Of A Child  
By Elizabeth Mehren

In this book I found the most eloquent words describing the experience of the death of a child, written by Ben Johnson, Samuel Clemons, Abraham Lincoln, and many other less well known bereaved parents. Ms. Mehren has used the words of others who are/were bereaved parents to express the sorrow and the universality of this experience. Somehow the beauty of these words enable me to feel loved, comforted, and most of all understood.

The strengths of the little book are that it is little and each chapter stands alone at a time when focus and concentration are at a premium and that the words of grieving parents, be they famous or not, are not only eloquent and beautiful but also understanding, consoling, and ultimately healing. I highly recommend this, my favorite grieving parents' book companion.

It was first published in 1997 and reissued in 2008. It can be found on Amazon, Barnes & Noble or on line from the Centering Corporation.

*Review by Pat MacMillan  
Mother to Sean  
TCF, Aurora*

## A Bear Hug for Father's Day



As Father's Day approaches, we are reminded of the significant contributions and unique love of fathers and stepfathers. Their defined role, after the death of their children, is to support their wives and surviving children. But their pain is deep.

Men, by their nature and in response to our society's expectations, do not usually grieve as openly as women. They do not talk as candidly about their loss. They generally do not reach out to others for comfort. They are, after all, the rock, the solid center of the family. Their wife's pain supersedes their pain because women are fragile. Or so we are told.

Yet, as I look into the eyes of so many bereaved fathers, I see a deep, gripping pain. The tears left unshed, the words that are never spoken, the anger, guilt and agony...all remain in the eyes of the bereaved father.

What can a father do? Talk with other bereaved fathers. Read books written by bereaved fathers. Talk with spouses, private counselors and close friends who are not as structured in their "male" societal roles. Try to attend three meetings of Compassionate Friends. You don't have to talk. But you might decide to express a single thought or idea, logically presented, to a small group. You might find peace in this place, and then again, you might not. But, as my own dad often said, "Step up to the plate and see what happens." He was a pretty wise man...a child of the depression, a football player, Greatest Generation, WW II Marine, a fighter, a provider, a protector...a man's man. He endured much in his 78 years, and I only saw him cry a few times.

But when his friend lost a child, my tough dad was the first one to reach out with a bear hug that wouldn't let go until the tears began to flow. They both cried. They both knew that the agony of losing a child was far worse than the horror of war. Together, they cried.

Happy Father's Day...May your bear hugs be many and your memories become sweeter with each passing year. May your child live forever in your heart so that peace embraces you always,

*~Annette Mennen Baldwin  
In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen  
& Father, James M. Mennen  
TCF Katy, TX*



## A Father's Grief



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.

*~Don Hackett  
TCF, Hingham, MA*

## Grieving In Pairs



How many times have people said, "Well, thank God you have each other." How many times have you felt "each other" to be entirely inadequate at meeting your needs?

Alarming statistics are available telling us of the rocky road parents encounter in their marriage after the death of a child. We sometimes see in ourselves a touchiness or quickness to become irritated that wasn't there before. It always seems that my "bad" day is my wife's good day, or the day she wakes up crying was the day I had planned on playing tennis.

Or sometimes, even more difficult, we both have a bad day and find no help from the other in pulling things back together. How can one person hold up another when he is himself face down in the mud?

Every person grieves differently. This is a rule that even applies within a family. And the needs of every individual are different. While you may need to talk and talk, your spouse may need some time alone to reflect inwardly. You have been through the worst experience of your life. And while at times you can face recovery as a team, sometimes you must develop the patience to be able to wait out certain needs alone or with someone else. Realize that no matter how it is shown, your partner hurts, too.

*~Gerry Hunt  
TCF White River Junction, VT*



## Newly Bereaved... No One Else Can Do This For You

People will speak of "closure," of "moving on," of "getting over it," of grief coming to an end. Smile kindly, and know, anyone who says these things hasn't lived this thing called grief.

To lose a child is to lose the very heart and soul of you. It is overwhelmingly disorienting. It takes a long, long time to find yourself again. It takes a long time to grow new life around the chasm of such grave loss. It takes a long time to grow beauty from ashes.

There will always be a hole in your heart, the size and shape of your child. Your child is absolutely irreplaceable. Nothing will fill the void your child left. But your heart will grow bigger— beautifully bigger— around the empty space your child left behind. The love and pain you carry for your precious child will be woven into every thread of your being. It will fuel you to do things you never dreamed you could do.

Eventually, you'll figure out how to live for both of you. It will be beautiful, and it will be hard. But, the love you two share will carry you through. You will spread this love everywhere you go. Eventually, you'll be able to see again. Eventually, you'll find your way again. Eventually, you'll realize you survived.

~Angela Mille

*Lovingly Lifted from TCF South Bay/LA Chapter*

## Remembering...



Red, white and blue  
For those we knew  
Who marched off to war.  
We honor them now  
And show them how  
Their bravery we can't ignore.

Heroes of war,  
They were so much more,  
Father and brother and friend.  
Flags at half mast  
To whom our gratitude we send.

We place flowers on the graves  
Of those who were brave,  
We salute them far and wide.  
Seeing poppies galore  
While our hearts soar,  
Remembering proudly those who have died.

2001 Jessica F., 3rd Grader  
Academy Elementary School, Madison, Connecticut

On Memorial Day, May 27, let us remember all the men and women in the armed services who have died in the various wars...and remember too their bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

## Moving On

It's what everyone wants me to do.  
They all think that I should.  
But no one tells me how.

### Moving On

Is it some kind of trip?  
Does it require a destination?  
I hardly have any energy to be where I am.  
Where would I feel more?

### Moving On

Away from how I am now?  
Away from all I have know?  
Away from my pain?  
Away from your death?  
Buy where could I go that all of this would not go with me?  
Nowhere, I think.  
Now, if only they'd leave me alone.  
When I am ready  
I will feel my own way  
to move on...  
While taking you along...

~Deb Kosmer

*Lovingly Lifted from:  
TCF, St. Paul Minnesota Newsletter  
Jun-Jul-Aug-Sept 2017*



## 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.santaclarita.com@gmail.com](mailto:tcf.santaclarita.com@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!

# *"Forever In Our Hearts"*

## Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



*Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays*

*May*

*June*

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Jeffrey Costin	5/17	Richard & Carol Costin	Daniel Renolds	6/22	Tom & Alice Renolds
Michael Arvizu	5/6	Robert & Juanita Arvizu	Darren Bullock	6/15	Carol Lock
Monique Gutierrez (Grandchild)	5/29	Irene Frenes	Cyrena Becerra	6/11	Mona Gonzalez
Sarah Crittenden	5/30	Jeanne & Steve Crittenden	Daniel McAlpine	6/27	Elaine McAlpine
Selena Cates	5/30	Eric & Elena Cates	Nicki Kent	6/15	Beth Kent
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	5/30	John & Joanne Campos	Mindy Siefert	6/7	Debbie Gardner
Joshua Matthews	5/14	Priscilla DiBlasio	Amber Wyatt	6/7	Lora Wyatt
Joshua Matthews (Grandchild)	5/14	Gloria DiBlasio			
Troy Covert	5/5	Melanie Miller			
Christopher Mosco	5/9	Marla Mosco			

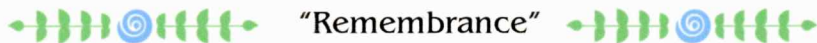


## *Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

*May*

*June*

Name	Date	Member
Brian Berry	6/30	Steve Berry
Christopher Rodriguez	6/13	Barbara Rawson
Steven Sprague	6/18	Marie Sprague
Michael Kelly	6/10	Kathy Kelly
Selena Cates	6/17	Eric & Elena Cates
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	6/17	John & Joanne Campos
Jeeven Viridi	6/12	Jaswir & Harvinder Viridi
Trey Brown	6/30	Christine Brown



**"Remembrance"**

You can shed tears that he is gone,  
 or you can smile because he has lived.  
 You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,  
 or you can open your eyes and see all he has left.  
 Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,  
 or you can be full of the love you shared.  
 You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,  
 or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.  
 You can remember him and only that he's gone,  
 or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.  
 You can cry and close your mind, be empty, and turn your back,  
 or you can do what he'd want:  
 Smile, Open Your Eyes,  
 Love and Go on.

*~Author Unknown*

*Lovingly Lifted from TCF, Atlanta Online Sharing*

*"No matter how old your child who died, the essence of this unique being remains within you forever.*

*It is through us and others who knew them that our children continue to live and affect our present world.*

*Though not in the way we hoped and expected, our beloved children are still alive."*

*~Kitty Reeve*