



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July-Aug 2024

Volume 25, 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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#### 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.

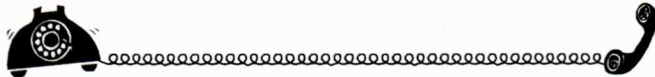
Our next 2 meetings will be on **July 11 & August 1**

**Please note: July's meeting is the second week of the month because of the July 4th holiday**

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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Linda Stout (Facebook Manager)  
Joanne Campos (Remembrance Secretary)  
Steve Crittenden (Webmaster)  
Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)  
(661-478-2948)

## My Grief is Like a River



My grief is like a river...  
I have to let it flow,  
But I myself determine  
Just where the banks will go.

Some days the current takes me  
In waves of guilt and pain,  
But there are always quiet pools  
Where I can rest again.

I crash on rocks of anger...  
My faith seems faint indeed,  
But there are other swimmers  
Who know that what I need

There are loving hands to hold me  
When the waters are too swift,  
And someone kind to listen  
When I just seem to drift.

Grief's river is a process  
Of relinquishing the past,  
By swimming in Hope's channels  
I'll reach the shore at last.

~Cynthia G. Kelly

*We can't compare our grief process.  
It is our own personal journey to embrace.  
It's yours to travel, and no one can  
Travel it more gracefully than you.*

~Lindsey Henke





## Summer Time, Vacation Time, Family Time

I'll bet you never dreamed that there would ever be a time in your life when you would not welcome vacation from work...and the day-to-day hassles of routine living. It's probably a shocker to you that the slow pace of summer, cookouts, softball games, etc., are now a nightmare. Everywhere we go, there are kids out of school enjoying their leisure time, and our bodies jolt as we search for our own absent child who enjoyed this time of the year with a passion!

Surrounded by summer fun, a bereaved parent needs only look around and there are painful memories at every corner. When we are faced with all the living, loving happy families with their children, the anger boils within and we feel very cheated.

And this year we are afraid to go back to the beach cottage we've visited every year, or to the favorite mountain retreat where we laid around for a week and relaxed, or the amusement park where the kids had to ride every ride and see every attraction, no matter what the temperature was. Yes, fear of our memories, fear of too much time to think, fear of too many kids, fear of bursting inside from our pain... all of these feelings are part of the first few years of summer vacations for bereaved parents.

It's been nine years now for me, and I need to tell you that it will get easier, but I found that for the first few years I needed to consciously change some of my routines in order to deal with my fears. I could not visit the same places we had visited when Todd was with us. We tried new experiences in new places with new people.

That isn't to say there weren't some down-times; however, the faster paced vacations worked better for us. I could not allow myself too much time to think. I enjoy those weekends away now, but for the first few summers I had to dig in the yard, repaint lawn furniture, rearrange the garage, and the multitude of busy projects we'd been putting off for the lack of time. That was a better vacation for me than forcing myself to go somewhere and feel miserable.

You've read it a hundred different times, you have to find your own way and your own peace—leave yourself room to escape if it becomes necessary. If you can find any enjoyment and relaxation, relish it...you deserve it, and it does not mean you don't care. It simply means you are healing. Now I walk down the beach and enjoy the solitude, or laugh when I see a toddler, or listen to the joy of kids laughing, and it warms my heart. Yes I miss him, but I know he enjoyed every minute of this season, and I know that's what he'd want for me...and thank God, I can do it once more!

~Linda T.  
TCF York, PA



## Fourth of July

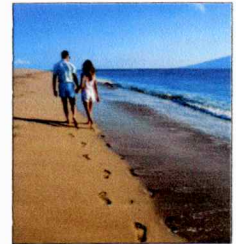
Each year on the 4th of July we celebrate the birth of a great nation - a nation of people "united" in a dream. It was through hope, determination and a bonded strength that the people of American strived to achieve their dream of freedom to be a free nation.

Nothing however, is achieved without a strong will. We, too, as bereaved parents are fighting a battle to be free - free of the pain that has become a part of our waking days. We want to be happy. We want to be able to enjoy life again.

You are one of those proud Americans. Refuse to give up. Fight for your dream. There is peace to be found in freedom!

~Written by a member of TCF Holmdel, NJ  
Lovingly lifted from TCF Wichita, KS newsletter

## Summertime and the Living is Easy...



The lazy, hazy days of summer...

What does summertime bring to your mind? I think of the beach with the waves softly washing ashore. Walking along with the sand between my toes. Finding "treasures" along the shoreline. The sound of the ocean is calming. The sun is warm on my face.

Life seems good.

And then I realize that being at the beach is forever changed for me. The memories of ties past at the beach with my family come flooding back. Lots of good memories.

I stare at the ocean and think...the ocean is like my grief.

Sometimes it seems wild and black with rage and almost impossible to manage. Riptides, currents and storm surges. Sometimes it's like rough waves hitting the shore, continually calm and I can wade I and let the cool water surround me.

So now I go to the each to remember. And let the sun warm my heart. Let he sound of the waves calm my soul. And get sand between my toes.

~Carol Tomaszewski, Annapolis Chapter, BP/USA  
Reprinted from 7/2011 DC/Northern Virginia Chap Newsletter  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)



# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**July 11-** Meeting, "Summer Memories" - Come & share with the group a past memory that brings a smile and some joy.

**Please note this meeting is the second week of the month.**

**Aug 1** - Meeting, "Tools That Help" - Please bring your favorite quote, poem, song, article, book, or something you discovered along your path of grief that has helped you to share with the group.

## After 15 Years

I often hear, "Why do you still go to Compassionate Friends, why are you still involved with that group, it has been 15 years after all, aren't you beyond that now?"

I no longer judge these people, I forgive them, for they simply cannot understand, in the multitude of ways, how The Compassionate Friends has helped to heal, and continues to help,

I remember after Danny died wondering how I would live one minute, one hour, one day without him. Where would my next breath come from? I would see others at the meetings beyond five years and say, that won't be me. I can't live that long without my son. But I did. And I did it with the help of TCF.

They gave me hope. The people who attended the meetings were authentic, freely and openly sharing their feelings and I knew it was a place I could share Danny and share my inner turmoil and fears without judgment.

Fifteen years later I can say that my grief has changed. I equate my grief to a pendulum - as my Danny said, "life is a pendulum." My grief pendulum no longer swings violently left and right without rhythm. My pendulum for the most has a soft rhythmic swing. Certainly, there are times when a memory or reflection of what was and what will never be enters my thoughts and it swings without care.

But, there is one thing I have learned that is true, it passes. My grief pendulum will return to a soft rhythmic swing once again. What does not pass is the light and love between mother and son. I hold on dearly to that truth when the chaos comes, yes after 15 years there are still times of chaos. I know it will be this way for the rest of my life. Grief will always be my constant companion, as will the love I have for my son. I am able to find moments and times of joy and happiness, sometimes bittersweet, but the times are there. I value and appreciate and enjoy them at a much deeper level today. At first I was afraid to love again, for fear of being hurt, but today, I love more deeply, May your grief pendulum swing a soft, rhythmic swing, and may you always remember the love and light never goes away.

*~Carol Moss*

*In Memory of her son Danny Harper  
TCF Reno, NV*

## 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:

Carlos & Fabiola Vargas, Parents of Jordan

Lisa Goodwill, Mother of Harrison

Kathleen Lencki, Mother of Kevin

Steve & Cathy Rusch, Parents of Ryan

## Please take note!

Our meeting for the of month July will be on the **SECOND Thursday** of the month. The date will be **July 11**, not July 4, as this is a holiday!

## To Our Members Further Down the "Grief Road"

We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. Think back...what would it have been like for you if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief and encourage you? It was from them you heard, "Your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer"



## Why the Butterfly?

Since the early centuries the butterfly has symbolized renewed life. The caterpillar signifies life here on earth; the cocoon, death; and the butterfly, the emergence of the dead into a new, beautiful and free existence.

Frequently, the butterfly is seen with the word "Nika," which means victory. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross movingly tells of seeing butterflies drawn all over the walls of the children's dormitories in the World War II concentration camps. Since Elisabeth believes in the innate intuitiveness of children, she concludes that these children knew their fate and were leaving us a message.

The Compassionate Friends embrace the butterfly as one of our symbols-a sign of hope to us that our children are living in another dimension with greater beauty and freedom, and that we may be able to build a new life after the death of our beloved children.

*~Lovingly lifted from: TCF South Suburban Chapter*

*Evergreen Park, IL*

*Jan/Feb 2016*



Warm summer sun, shine kindly here;  
Warm southern wind, blow softly here;  
Green sod above, lie light, lie light -  
Good night, dear heart, good night, good night.

*-Robert Richardson  
(Inscription on the headstone  
of Susy Clemens,  
daughter of Mark Twain)*

## Hurricane Houses



We grievors remind me of people who live by the ocean, where they build sturdy, good-looking homes which offer most spectacular views. One can tell how their owners cherish these well-tended houses with shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

But then, there comes a hurricane. In a matter of minutes the treasured, handsome homes are struck, broken, swept away by wind and water, covered by an avalanche of uncaring sand.

I have wondered, weren't the people afraid of another hurricane? Yes, of course, they were afraid, but there was no better place in all the world to live, and so they would stay, they would risk it all again.

I understand those people in their hurricane houses. My life, too, has felt like a hurricane house, at times. My children died, taken by one drowning and by one suicide - leaving me broken and swept aside by a storm of tragedy, overwhelmed by loss.

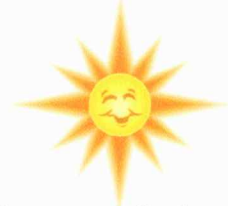
Yes if someone asked me about it today, I would say that, while I was bitterly hurt and hopeless then, I see that my place in life is still the finest, because I once had my children. I have learned to accept the lonely beach. I built another house and changed "me" lives there in those rooms filled with welcome feelings and cherished memories.

I think that a veteran-griever will know what I mean, while "Hurricane House" may seem impossible for newly bereaved parents. Perhaps we will all understand next year...or the year after that. There is no hurry.

To honor the legacy of times remembered, to find a new view of life, and for the sake of those who survived with us, many of us have decided to stay on the dangerous beach and to restore our hurricane house with its shiny clean windows like eyes watching the beautiful, unpredictable sea.

*~Sascha Wagner  
From "Winterson"*

## Summer Thoughts



Summer is a time when things naturally slow down, a time when many are waiting for the orderly routine of their lives to begin again. For those of us in grief whose lives are already in limbo, it can seem endless if we let it. Seeing children, babies, and teenagers is not easy for us, and we see them everywhere from shopping centers to beaches. Everyone is out living, loving, enjoying carefree activities with their children, and we want to scream, "it's not fair!" I was sitting on my patio one evening at dusk recently listening to the shouts of children playing, and I was crying as I remembered the sounds that my child used to make. I became very depressed as I thought what a long summer this was going to be. In my reverie, I was reminded of a recent comment that I had heard at a TCF meeting: "My child was such a loving, giving person. He would not want me to waste my life being bitter." I also remembered a good friend telling me to "count my blessings" and naming all the things I had to be grateful for. I was furious at the time. Nothing that I had to be grateful for could compensate for the fact that my child was dead.

Now, sitting in the twilight of this early summer evening, I began to see things differently. I was determined that this summer would not be an eternity; I would not let it be. I decided first of all to stay busy. I know I can find plenty to do if I only take the time to look. I am also going to try to enjoy the simple things that used to give me so much pleasure, like working in my garden, and flowers. I then decided to try to be truly grateful for the blessings that I have, like my husband, my surviving children, my job, friends, etc.

It has been almost five years for me, and I know that last year this would not have worked. Of course, I still have times of sadness. I know I always will, but I have decided that in the process of grieving, we close so many doors that the only way to recovery is to reopen them gradually at our own pace.

I know I will never be the same person I was before the death of my child but I hope eventually in some ways I will be a better person because suffering can be beneficial if we learn and grow through it. A year ago I didn't feel this way, and I know I still have a long way to go, but in the meantime, I know the greatest tribute to my child will be to enjoy the summer as he would have done.

*~Libby Gonzalez  
TCF Huntsville, AL*

*Let the joy of your loved one's life begin to take  
the place of the hurt and anger of the death.*

*~ Darcie Sims  
"Footsteps Through the Valley"*



**Were Received From:**

**Memories**

*Patricia Vasallo*  
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Sean Tessier**  
7/25 - 12/5

Time can never erase,  
the memory of your face;  
nor the passage of the years,  
stem the volume of my tears.

You are with me for always,  
in my heart throughout all days;  
then in my dreams nightly,  
your star shines ever so brightly.

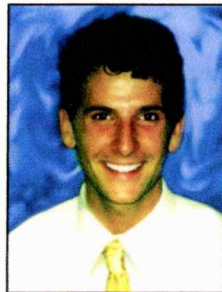
I want your spirit to remain,  
inside of me, despite the pain.  
To forget you would be a curse,  
because no memories would be much worse.

You were born a part of me,  
now you live within the heart of me;  
forever precious, forever young,  
my beautiful, darling little ones.

~Jacquelyn M. Comeaux  
In Loving Memory of My Angels, Michelle, Jerry & Danny  
Reprinted by permission of author

*Tammy Gauld*  
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Bradley  
McBurney**  
4/22 - 7/18



**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!

*Robert & Junita Arvizu*  
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Michael  
Arvizu**  
5/6 - 4/22





# "Forever In Our Hearts"

## Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



### Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

#### July

#### August

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Greg Hilton	7/11	Kathy Hilton	Michelle Briones	8/24	Bert & Diane Briones
Kevin Petersen	7/26	Cheryl Petersen	Steven Sprague	8/4	Marie Sprague
Sean Tessier	7/25	Patricia Vassallo	Eric Rodriguez	8/11	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
Michael Lake	7/20	Marie Whitehead	Nicholas Colley	8/22	Scott & Jade Colley
			Cameron Morey	8/26	Dennis & Linda Morey
			Jordan Vargas	8/27	Carlos & Fabiola Vargas



### Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

#### July

#### August

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Bradlev McBurnev	7/18	Tammv Gauld	Daniel McAlpine	8/29	Elaine McAlpine
Bailey Haney (Grandchild)	7/11	Myra Kulick	Nicki Kent	8/31	Beth Kent
Melissa Lind	7/6	Marcy Torrey	Matthew Weiss	8/18	William Weiss
Amanda Perez	7/17	Carrie Hall	Cameron Morey	8/26	Dennis & Linda Morey
Miles Davis	7/28	Michele Davis	Izaiah Baxter	8/11	Clyde Baxter
Kevin Perlstein	7/13	Robert & Kathleen Lencki	Ezequiel Sanchez	8/12	Stephanie Sanchez
			Harrison Goodwill	8/21	Lisa Goodwill

### This Is Not the End of Joy

Grieving is bits of many things - memories, regrets, reminders - each of which bears its own special weight in our burden of sorrow. Each bit has to be gone through patiently, silently, painfully, as one goes through old papers in a long forgotten trunk, considering each one separately, remembering, assigning it to some new box within our hearts.

Healing, too, is bits of many things - smiles which multiply as the days pass; chilling remembrances turned warm by the returning sun. A day will come when there will be more healing than of grieving, and reasons for joy will begin to pile up in the freshly - swept rooms of our lives.

~Molly Fumia  
From: *Safe Passages*

**NONE** of the tears  
 that you have ever cried in your life  
 were *wasted or in vain.*  
**EVERYTHING** you wept over  
 honored those moments in life  
 as valuable and important  
 and those feelings of sadness  
 were *sacred to your Soul.*  
 ~ Dr. Jeff Mullan

**The Compassionate Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies