



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Nov-Dec 2024

Volume 25, 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.

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MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next 2 meetings are:

November 7, 2024
December 5, 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
Alice Renolds (Co-Leader & Editor) 661-252-4374

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



Days of Thanks

In a year when much was given,
much was taken too,
So we pause and give our thanks for
what now is.
Think, too, of what once was,
And we are grateful for the threads of lives
gone by,
Threads that enrich the fabric of this,
the life we know.

Lois Wyse
Lovingly Lifted from:
Atlanta TCF Online Newsletter

*"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.
It turns what we have into enough, and more.
It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order,
confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast,
a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for
today and creates a vision for tomorrow"*

~Melody Beady



A Forgiving Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving was always an easy holiday. Unlike Christmas, there was no pressure of giving just the *right gift!* Thanksgiving Day brought family gatherings and good food. Late on those afternoons, we would return home full from over-eating and satisfied that our family relationships were intact. It was also a day that reminded us of everything for which we were thankful.

We are supposed to be thankful for our health, our families, our comfortable life, etc. The death of a child changes our perceptions, however. When the family now gathers around the Thanksgiving table, I now see a missing plate that no one else sees. When our nieces and nephews are laughing or crying, I hear a voice that no one else hears. When a family member recounts a story about something his or her child did last week, I wish for a story to tell. (Of course, when I say no one else, I exclude my wife and daughter. I'm sure that they see, hear and wish what I do, although probably at different times.)

We still have much to be thankful for, we bereaved parents, and we should remember that. But now Thanksgiving Day has an additional observance for us too, doesn't it. It is a day of forgiveness also. We must forgive others who cannot acknowledge the missing child, for whatever reasons. If family and friends cannot understand us, then we must try to understand them especially on holidays. If we can exhibit tolerance, forgiveness and understanding on a day on which we offer thanks, we can climb another step on our ladder to recovery.

I hope you have a forgiving Thanksgiving.

*~Jim Hobbs
Lovingly Lifted from the
BP/USA, A Journey Together, Fall 2003
www.bereavedparentsusa.org*



*May the beauty of the fall surround you,
be a source of comfort and healing.
May these affirmations remind you of the
joy that your loved one brought into
your life, a gift that is yours forever.*

~The Compassionate Friends, Inc. 2000

A Season of Many Feelings



Fall is a season of many feelings,
Autumn is here once again
as it comes every year.
And with the leaves,
my falling tears.

This time of year is the hardest of all.
My heart is still breaking,
once again it is fall.
Memories once so vivid
are seeming to fade.
My time spent with you
seems some other age.
This season reminds me
of grief and of pain.
But yet teaches hope
and joy once again.
For the trees are still living
beneath their gray bark,
And you, my sweet child,
are alive in my heart!

*~Cinda Schake
TCF Butler, PA*



Secrets From a Bereaved Mom at the Holidays

Yes, our dining room table is old. The wood has white spots where a pot of tea spilled one day; the circle over there is the place where a hot dish of mashed potatoes sat without a pad under it; the scratches are lines from homework and running little cars on it's surface. The legs need to be glued back together from time to time. It doesn't even match the rest of the furniture anymore. But he sat at this table. My son. He ate here with the rest of the family. He helped me set this table many times. So, I think I'll keep it. And I'll light a candle and put it in the middle, even if we eat in the middle of the day. And I'll polish the chair he sat in. And I'll slowly eat a piece of pumpkin pie...just for him. No one needs to know...it's just a mother's secret.

*~Alice Monroe
TCF, Mesa County Chapter*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

- Nov 7- Meeting, Make Luminaries** (See Below)
Please join us as we decorate a luminary for our Candle Lighting Program
- Nov 22-** Deadline to send in picture for video/ Candle Lighting
- Dec 5 - Meeting, "Tips on special ways to honor your child during the holidays"**
- Dec 8 - Candle Lighting Program** - (See Below) **6:30 pm, please note time!**



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 along with the sand and candle.

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 by **November 22**.



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 Santa Clarita Grocery.

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 Candles 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 memories,
invite your courage to remember everything.*

~Sascha Wagner

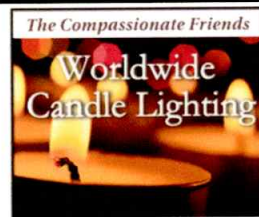
Welcome New Members



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:

Khalil Hart, Mother of Christian
Lisa Moscheth, Mother of Christopher
Joe Roberto, Father of Dustin



23rd Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

December 8 @ 6:30 PM

We are 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 8 beginning at **6:30PM @ Bethlehem SCV, 27265 Luther Dr. Canyon Country, 91351**.

This very touching evening includes music, featured performers, a 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"



Candles in the Night

A heart broken by the death of a child can never be healed. As parents, we try every way that can be thought of to cope with the loss, but the void will always be there. At first that emptiness seems to take your breath away and most times we wish it would.

This becomes different with the passage of time. It never goes away, but at some point, we learn to live with it and, in fact, this horrible feeling becomes a lifeline of sorts. One of our biggest fears is to forget our children. Forget how they looked or how their voice sounded. The smiles and tears that blur together to make a child. This emptiness in effect becomes a constant yearning to remember our children.

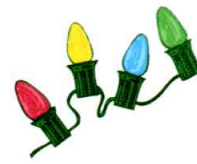
Our hearts force us to find ways to fill that void to maintain our role as parents. Some are as simple as visiting the cemetery and some as complex as changing our entire lives, dedicated to the memory of our child. In between are the many rituals we create or borrow from others to honor the memories and to keep our child's name alive.

Lighting a candle and saying a child's name keeps the memory burning bright. It means we are struggling to cope with this unwanted role of bereaved parent in the only positive manner we can. We will most certainly shed tears every time and we will still miss our child, but we are doing something that allows the world to hear our child's name and for that one moment, the candle means, oh, so much more than anyone else could ever understand.

For a fleeting second that is our universe and every memory we have comes flooding to us as we see the flame through tears, distorted into something magical. A tiny flickering flame can warm the heart and it's nice to think that perhaps they can feel us also. It's a beacon, our light in the window, a shining star in the darkness. It's an opening of our hearts and a way to share our grief.

*~Jim Lowery,
TCF Sugar Kand, SW Houston Chapter*

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



Christmas Memories

When snowflakes dance on winter winds
And colored lights shine Christmas cheer,
When children's laughter fills the air
And family gathers from far and near,
I try to celebrate with them
And not let my hurting show.
But the empty spaces within my heart,
At this season, seems to grow.
Till often times it fills the days
And many night times too.
With aching thoughts and memories
Of Christmas I spent with you.
Yes, memories do hurt, it's true
But I have this feeling too.
I'm so glad I hold these memories,
For with them I hold part of you.
So for now I'll wipe away the tears
And join with loved ones dear
To celebrate this Christmas time,
For I know that, in my heart, you're here.

*Arden Lansing, TCF Monmouth County, NJ
~Written by Sandy Siewers, a close friend,
In memory of Cassandra Radke
Lovingly lifted from TCF Wabash Valley Chapter
Newsletter 1998*



Chanukah

Chanukah is a joyous holiday. It is a time for lighting the menorah, making potato latkes, spinning the dreidel, exchanging gifts and spending time with family and friends. We also tell our children the story of Chanukah. how the Maccabees defeated the Syrians and the miracle of the oil. There was only enough oil to burn in the Temple for one day, but miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days, To celebrate this miracle we light the Menorah and recite a prayer for eight days.

When I think about the miracle of Chanukah, I think of the story of David, my David's story. David abused drugs for several years, but in the end he won his fight over the mighty drugs. But, no miracle for David, for he died from being given the wrong pain medication following the extraction of his wisdom teeth. I still wonder why David beat the odds in the battle against drugs, but lost the war.

Time has softened David's loss and allows me to remember the miracle of his birth and his short wonderful life. I cherish the light of his laughter, the light of his wit and intelligence, and the light of his love.

~Lois Copeland, TCF Arlington, VA

 **Love Gifts** 

Were Received From:

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

**Eric
Spencer**
12/29 – 11/2



Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Eric
Rodriguez**
8/11 – 1/20



**If Love Could
Make A Difference**

If love could make a difference
In how our lives unfold
My heart would not be broken
I'd still have you to hold

If love could make a difference
And hold the hand of time
I'd pause the clock that wound your life
And make it tick with mine

If love could make a difference
In all the words we've spoken
I'd replay all the "I Love You"
To heal my heart that's broken

If love could make a difference
If kisses were like years
I'd trade them in to buy some time
And wash away my tears

If love could make a difference
In families as close as ours
We'd hear your laughter in the wind
And see you in the stars

If love could make a difference
As I pray on bended knee
I know that God would turn back time
And give you back to me

 **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!

*~Connie DeVol
In memory of her son AJ DeVol
Lovingly Lifted from the TCF Atlanta
On-Line Newsletter 9/2008*

As a bereaved parent, the holidays are and will always be shadowed by the loss of our child. The tears are usually just under the surface as we remember what used to be or what should have been. Some family and friends will not understand why it is so difficult for us to join in the traditional gatherings. Please be patient with us as we learn how to find our way through grief and the holidays when our child, grandchild or sibling is missing. —Karna Carroll, Frankfort, KY-TCF

"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
Amanda Miranda	11/16	Patrice Madrigal	Logan Ortega	12/22	Ellie & Amanda
Keith Drynan	11/1	Lisa Grose	Danny Sullivan	12/10	Terasa Papa
Jason Fields	11/21	Renee Fields			
Christian Malan	11/23	Lex & Emily Malan			



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	Amber Wyatt	12/20	Lora Wyatt
Andro Barsoum	11/04	Odette Awad			
Jax Markley	11/06	Matt & Daisy			
Christian Malan	11/23	Lex & Emily			
Jason Fields	11/21	Renee Fields			



I Wish You Were Here Today

I wish you were here today
 Even for a little while
 So I could say Happy Birthday
 And see your beautiful smile
 The only gifts today will be
 The ones you left behind
 The laughter, joy and happiness
 Precious memories....the best kind

Today I'll do my very best
 To try to find a happy place
 Struggling to hide my heavy heart
 and tears on my face
 I'll sit quietly and look at your picture
 Thinking of you with love
 Hoping you're doing Okay
 In Heaven up Above

*The gates of memory never close,
 how we miss you no one knows.*

*No longer in our lives to share,
 but in our hearts your always there.*

~unknown