



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

May-June 2025

Volume 26, 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.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC.

P.O. Box 46
Wheaton, IL 60187
Toll Free (877) 969-0010
Email: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org
Website: www.compassionatefriends.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TCFUSA

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

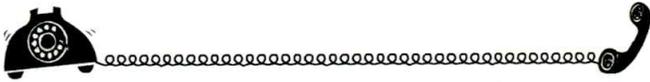
Mailing Address: 27949 Park Meadow Dr.
Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Email: tcf.santaclarita@gmail.com
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/
TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA](http://www.facebook.com/TheCompassionateFriendsofSantaClaritaCA)
Website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

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

May 1, 2025
June 5, 2025

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)

Vespers



Just at sunset
does your busy day
suddenly fall silent
and remember?

Does the rising night
make you ready
to see that face again,
to feel that love?

Let the sunset
weave its magic.
Invite the rising night
to cast its dream.

Have we not said
a thousand times and more
that we are richest
when the heart remembers?

~Sascha Wagner
From "For you From Sascha"

*The heart knows many songs and sings them well.
The heart knows images and sees them,
even when life is much too dark to light the eyes.
The heart knows many songs we cannot hear:
The heart is wise.*

~Sascha Wagner



Anticipating Mother's Day

Before we lost our children to death, Mother's Day was a happy time. We each reflect back on Mother's Days past...gifts, cards, special memories and one day set aside to acknowledge the best in our relationship with our treasured children.

With the death of our child, this dynamic was forever transfigured. Now, instead of looking forward to this day, we grasp at anything that will keep our minds away from it. Yet the anxiety still creeps into our minds and hearts; our stomachs churn and tears fill our eyes at the most inopportune moments. The dreadful countdown begins in late April and lasts for nearly three weeks.

This is the eighth Mother's Day I have endured since the death of my son. Each year I have the same, desperate anxiety, yet each year the day is a bit easier to handle. Each year the anticipation is far worse than the day itself... "borrowing trouble" as my dad would say. Since my son is my only child, I do not have the comfort of other children nor do I have the need to put on a happy face. Instead, I am able to choose what I will do without feeling the burden of guilt.

While my first Mother's Day was filled with tears, subsequent Mother's Days have been more subdued. The choice to embrace or ignore Mother's Day is yours alone. Many bereaved mothers adopt a new perspective which honors their child and still gives normalcy to their family. Mother's Day is bittersweet for us. The pain is part of the love that we will feel for our children for eternity. We wouldn't trade one treasured moment for a cosmic reduction of our pain.

Some of us plan the day carefully. Some of us just "go with the flow." Some of us weep; some of us work. Some of us read, some of us revel in this special moment set aside just for mothers. Each of us makes a choice that is based on our own truth.

The day itself is not nearly as overwhelming as the buildup of anxiety and sadness which precedes it. I have found this to be true of all holidays, birthdays, death anniversaries and special occasions. I am trying to live in the moment. When the moment of Mother's Day happens, I will decide what I should do. I refuse to let others pressure me. I refuse to become maudlin over greeting card commercials and heart-grabbing point-purchase marketing efforts. I will not be manipulated by the agenda of others.

But on Mother's Day, as on each day of the year, I will think of my son, remembering the child he was and the man he became. I will honor his life by doing the best I can with what is left of my life. I will remain in the moment and treasure my memories. And for this mother, that is enough.

~Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of her son, Todd Mennen

Happy
Mother's Day



Gently, Softly, Slowly, With Love

Tears stream down my face. I repeat my mantra.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I give myself permission to grieve.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I yearn. I search. I cling. My heart breaks.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I wail. I scream. I worry. I despair.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I listen. I read. I write. I pray. Not often, I talk.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I remember. Your face. Your eyes. Your smile. Your love.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I feel your presence next to me. I reach out my hand.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love.

I learn to care for myself, as I once cared for you.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love

I face one more day.
Gently. Softly. Slowly. With Love

~Debbie Ortega
For her daughter Angela
TCF "We Need Not Walk Alone Magazine, Spring 2008

Their Song of Love

*Remembering on this Mother's Day
the melody your child etched
in your heart.
The sweet song of love
that only your child could place there.
As this special day brings
their song to you,
may the warmth of their eternal love
fill your heart once again,
For their song is never ending.*

~Patty Erdman
TCF Longview, WA

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

May 2 - Meeting, "We are still their Mothers"

June 6 - Meeting, "Your child will always be the light in your heart"



"That Room" Becomes Home

The setting is a little strange. "That Room" is longer than it is square. The chairs are in an oblong circle, boxes of tissue are strategically placed. Someone has made coffee and there are brownies or a cake - and all the pictures.

Sometimes you will walk into "that room" feeling as weak as a kitten, and sometimes as strong as a bull. No matter how you're feeling when you see all those chairs, you think: "It's not possible; there can't be that many people who feel the way I feel!" But little by little you watch the chairs fill up.

It's like being at your house with company, EXCEPT this room is a safe haven. You feel secure, and there's a warm feeling in the room - the comfort of being accepted. Here, you won't be judged by other people. It is safe to take off your mask and let your feelings show, to share your thoughts. Here you get an understanding smile and feel the comfort of a "meant" hug - the warmth of someone who really wants to know how you are doing, instead of asking: "Are you still dealing with this?" or "You're still going to those meetings?"

Here, you are accepted for the person you have become. You won't hear: "I liked the old you better," or "I want the old you back," or "You're not fun anymore." In "that room" they understand the "new" you who has survived the **WORST** thing that life can hand a person.

Before you know it, "that room" is more comfortable than any place you can think of. I've been walking into this room for 12 1/2 years now, and it is full of people who know me better and are closer to me than my own family. They became my "new" friends, my "new" family. What I have learned and shared with my new family has changed the pain I carry. They taught me how to put my life back together, how to go on.

I will always miss my beautiful daughter, Sara; I will never forget her, and yes, my life will go on.

"That room" has become home.

~Mardy Burns
TCF, Independence, MO

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:

Jennifer Todd, mother of Kaitlyn

Robin Walker, mother of Sky

48th TCF National Conference July 11 - July 13, 2025 Bellevue/Seattle, Washington

This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue, Washington. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. Go to the National's website at www.compassionatefriends.org and click on the tab- events. There you will find the link for reservations.

The discounted room rate with Hyatt is \$165 per night plus applicable taxes and fees. Please note that each attendee can reserve a maximum of two rooms. Please remember that many attendees arrival on Thursday because the conference begins early on Friday morning. There will also be pre-conference activities offered on Thursday evening.



Book Review *Transcending Loss*

by Ashely Davis Prend, A.C.S.W.

An inspiring new approach to the lifelong process of grieving. The author asserts that death doesn't end the relationship, it simply forges a new type of relationship-one based not on physical presence but on memory, spirit, and love. A licensed psychotherapist and bereaved support specialist helps griever's deal with the ongoing impact of their loss - and the attempt to transcend it.

This is a book about death and grief, yes, but more importantly it is a book about love and hope. I have learned from (my interviews) courageous people about pain, struggle, resiliency, and meaning. Their stories show that over time you can learn to transcend even in spite of pain. I hope this book will help you move beyond grief and will guide you on your journey through time of healing and transcendence.

~Taken from the introduction



Dear Bereaved Father

I am very sorry about the death of your child. When my son died, I remember thinking there are no words to describe the myriad of powerful feelings. I have also learned that there are no words I can share to take the pain away or give meaning to your sense of loss. The truth is, the future will be forever different and your grief...well...will be with you forever, though I believe eventually you'll learn to live with it. And you will go on living.

What advice do I have? First attend to your grief. Someone wrote, "The pain that is unbearable cannot be healed." After my initial outpouring of grief, I felt that I needed to be strong for my wife. I buried my son in the ground and buried myself in busy-ness. I discovered much later that my wife concluded I didn't really care about my son. I did not listen to the chaplain's advice. He said, "Who said you have to be strong to be supportive? Go have a good cry on each other's shoulder."

I discovered that grief is one of those pay me now or pay me later" realities. Let the tears flow. Seek a healthy outlet for your anger. Share your feelings of guilt. Give your sense of helplessness and depression time and space.

Mothers and fathers grieve differently. Her grief is not better or worse, just different. Her coping style is different. Be patient with her and yourself. Grief is a roller coaster of emotions. You will not ride the ups and downs at the same time. You cannot take her grief away, but you can share it. You cannot prevent her from suffering, but you can prevent her from suffering for the wrong reasons. Be a loving listener. Share your feelings. Hold each other tenderly and often.

Men often have trouble reaching out for support. Certainly many have trouble offering support to men. I got so tired of hearing, "How's your wife doing?" I rarely heard, "How are you doing?" I cannot stress how important I believe it is for you to find and use one or more support persons. No one can do your grieving for you; no one grieves well alone! I urge both of you to join a bereaved parent support group. Consider reading together a book about grief.

Your child has died. Your dreams and memories will never die. Death demands that you let go, though that is no easy process. Letting go is not forgetting. Letting go is ultimately forgiving this tragedy, experiencing acceptance along with sadness and having the courage to risk living and loving again. I wish you a healthy journey through your grief - from another bereaved father.

*~Chaplain James Cunningham
TCF Victoria, Inc.
Lovingly Lifted from BP/USA Newsletter,
A Journey Together
www.bereavedparentsusa.org*

When Fathers Weep At Graves



I see them weep
the fathers at the stones
taking off the brave armor
forced to wear in the work place
clearing away the debris
with gentle fingers
inhaling the sorrow
diminished by anguish
their hearts desiring
what they cannot have -
to walk hand in hand
with children no longer held -
to all the fathers who leave a part
of their hearts at the stones
may breezes underneath trees of time
ease their pain
as they receive healing tears
the gift the children give

*~Alice J. Wisler
For David, in memory of our son Daniel
August 1992-February 1997*



It's June



It might have been her wedding. It was supposed to be his graduation day; his friends are there - he is not. You had always planned to take them to Disneyland, but it is too late for that, now.

When they died, they took some of your future as well; they took your dreams for them. They left a hole in your life, and you will never feel completely whole again.

Should you accept those invitations to weddings and graduations? Only you know what is comfortable for you... Give yourself all the room you need, no matter what anyone else says. Perhaps this year, you will want to send a card or gift instead of attending the event.

A couple in our chapter went to their son's friend's wedding reception and skipped the wedding ceremony, which would have been too painful for them. One mom said she left a graduation with mixed emotions. She ached for her son's place in line, getting his diploma; but she also felt honored to have been invited by her son's friend and proud they brought her flowers "for Jim," and she loved hearing all the stories about her son that they shared.

What you have left is the love you feel for them, the memories that they left you - these will always be a part of you. In this way, they are a part of your future.

This is a very sad and difficult time for you, so do something nice for yourself today. Isn't that what your child would have wanted?

*~L.E. Skagit Chapter
Mount Vernon, WA*



Love Gifts

Were Received From:

Jim & Susan Kirk

In Loving Memory of their children:

**Jamie
Knopf**

10/21 - 11/21



**Justin
Knopf**

11/28 - 11/21



Kirk & Dianne Mueller

In Loving Memory of their daughter:

**Melissa Jane
Mueller**

3/26 - 11/3



*"A Mother's Love is a like a circle.
there is no beginning,
there is no ending."*

~ unknown

A Solitary Journey

Grief is a solitary journey. No one but you knows how great the hurt is. No one but you can know the gaping hole left in your life when someone you know has died. And no one but you can mourn the silence that was once filled with laughter and song. It is the nature of love and of death to touch every person in a totally unique way. Comfort comes from knowing that people have made the same journey. And solace comes from understanding how others have learned to sing again.

~Helen Steiner Rice



In Remembrance of John

One bright day he went off to war
My precious first-born son,
To battle in an alien land
In a war that would never be won.
As we waved goodbye on that fateful day,
My eyes were filled with tears.
He looked so young to be leaving home,
Younger than his nineteen years.
The months passed slowly, week by week,
The news was ever grim.
Despite my prayer, the fear was there
At the thought of losing him.
Then, one sad day, it came to pass
The knock upon the door.
My dear brave boy - the one I loved
Would be with me no more.
He died heroically, I'm told
A good soldier to the end.
He never lost his faith in God
And to all he was a friend.
Now his name is engraved on that famous wall
For any and all to see.
But, in my aching heart I wish
That he was here with me.

*~Susan Herndon
Bereaved Parents of the USA
Marion County Chapter, FL
www.bereavedparentsusa.org*

On Memorial Day, May 26, we remember all the American men and women in the armed services who died in the various wars... and we remember their bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings.

"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
Sarah Crittenden	5/30	Jeanne & Steve Crittenden	Cyrena Becerra	6/11	Mona Gonzalez
Selena Cates	5/30	Eric & Elena Cates	Daniel McAlpine	6/27	Elaine McAlpine
Selena Cates (Grandchild)	5/30	John & Joanne Campos	Nicki Kent	6/15	Beth Kent
Joshua Matthews	5/14	Priscilla DiBlasio	Mindy Siefert	6/7	Debbie Gardner
Joshua Matthews (Grandchild)	5/14	Gloria DiBlasio	Amber Wyatt	6/7	Lora Wyatt
Troy Covert	5/5	Melanie Miller			
Christopher Mosco	5/9	Marla Mosco			
Christian Hart	5/31	Khalil Hart			
Kaitlyn Todd	5/17	Jennifer Todd			



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

May

June

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Ryan Ludwick	5/7	Cathy Rusch	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
			Christian Hart	6/6	Khalil Hart
			Clarence Simpson	6/2	Latasha Wiginton
			Noah Carmona	6/2	David & Itzel Carmona
			Jayden Saenz	6/28	Amanda Tejad

As We Journey

"As we journey through these painful experiences of living, we must never forget that we have an amazing resilience and capacity to survive. Just as whole forests burn to the ground and eventually grow anew, just as spring follows winter, so it is nature's way that through it all, whatever we suffer, we can keep on growing. It takes courage to believe we can survive, that we will grow. It takes courage, too, to live now and not postpone living until some vague tomorrow."

*~Judy Tatelbaum
"The Courage to Grieve"*

LOVE



I was, still am - the best part of you.
 You are, will always be - the best part of me.
 LOVE
 Carried In the womb, Now cradled in the heart.
 LOVE
 Never ends.
 Moments of Time—Held, Eternal, Remembered

*~Pamela Hagen
TCF, We Need Not Walk Alone, 2016*