



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Sept-Oct 2025

Volume 26, No. 5



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 two meetings are:

September 4, 2025
October 2, 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:

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



There Will Come A Day

There will come a day when
the tears of sorrow will softly flow
into tears of remembrance...
and your heart will begin
to heal itself...
and grieving will be interrupted
by episodes of joy
and you will hear the whispers of hope.

There will come a day when
you will welcome
the tears of remembrance...
as a sun-shower of the soul...
a turning of the tide...
a promise of peace.

There will come a day when
you will smile and laugh and
tell your story without tears
as you remember.

TCF Chapter Bronx, New York

*"Our loved ones are still and always
will be a part of us.
They are threads in our fabric
and we cannot lose their love.*

~Darcie Sims

Wake Me Up When September Ends



*Summer has come and passed
The innocent can never last
Wake me up when September ends.*



Even without looking at the calendar, my body and soul takes note. I know the time of the year by heart. It is the beginning of the school year. For nearly my whole life this time of year has signaled a fresh start, anticipation of things to come. A time for new shoes, fresh notebooks, sharp, unchewed pencils. All these things beckon of hopes and dreams, plans and goals for success and achievement.

Our son, Jake died two months short of his high school graduation. We received his college acceptance letter the day of his funeral. Last fall, we watched his friends and classmates head off to college. Many of them came to say good bye to us; after all, we had "adopted" them as our sons and daughters now. Of course, we wished them well with a smile and a hug. Our hearts were aching to be lugging things into a dorm room, too.

So September is here once more and I think about what Jake would be doing now. I think about all the parents for whom this time of year is difficult, also. I think of those parents who would be putting crayons into a cute little back pack, those who would be watching that first ball game of the season, and those who would maybe be encouraging a college grad to find that first job and begin paying off student loans. Our sons and daughters have gone straight to the "Head of the Class" but we wish we were able to give them a hug as they achieve glorious dreams beyond our imagination!

*As my memory rests
But never forgets what I lost...
Wake me up when September ends.*

*~Laurie Dreier
TCF, St Paul*



Changing Of The Seasons

The summer heat is fading and the evenings begin to cool; autumn whispers in the wind. Labor Day often signals the last 'hurrah' for days-off as school buses resume their familiar routes and leaf gathering chores are added to our days.

In our journey towards recovery, there are also seasons. For many, autumn is a reflective time, when nature begins its own cycle of shutting down and dying. A time of quiet melancholy may fill your heart. Distant shadows of the approaching holidays begin to creep into your mind.

But if you look closely, you will notice autumn sings loudly her song of beauty and rebirth. She puts on her finest wardrobe, filled with colors of warmth and comfort. Different are these colors than bright spring and summer florals, but how beautiful and peaceful. I see autumn as a season of inner strength, with roots reaching deep into the heart of the earth for nurturing.

So as we gather leaves and find long forgotten jackets, my wish is that the harsh edges of pain will begin to recede and your memories bring you warmth and comfort.

*~D. Barta
TCF Portland, OR*



The Boy Who Wasn't There

I looked for you today, the boy who wasn't there.
I looked for you among the children going off to school.
I looked at their new and shiny shoes and watched for untied laces.
I looked at their smiling faces, looking for a familiar crooked grin.

I looked for you today, the boy who wasn't there.
I looked among your friends who played on a playground memorialized for you.

I looked at those bouncy heads as they skipped and played, looking for a cowlick that stuck up just right.
I looked at them as they traveled home, bubbling with stories to tell about their first day at school.

As you tuck your children to bed tonight, give them an extra hug; a thought, a smile, a prayer...
for the boy who isn't there.

*~Margaret Melendez-Racine,
BP/USA, A Journey Together
March/April 2001
www.bereavementparentsusa.org*

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

Sept 4 - Meeting, "Precious Links" What is it that keeps your connection to your child alive?

Oct 2 - Meeting, "What's In A Name"

Nov 6 - Meeting, Decorate Luminaries for Candle Lighting Program on Dec 14.



About Our Meetings

Please don't stay away from a meeting because the scheduled topic does not interest you. At each meeting there will be time to discuss and share whatever is on your mind. We welcome your participation, but it is not required.



World Suicide Prevention Day Creating Hope Through Action

September 10

Please light a candle near a window at 8 PM on Wednesday, September 10, 2025. To show your support for suicide prevention, to remember a lost loved one, and for the survivors of suicide.

The loss of a loved one who has completed suicide....

There are no perfect formulas for living through the loss of a loved one who has completed suicide. There are no absolutes, no real guidelines, only the sharing of common experiences and reactions that occur.

No words can explain adequately the phenomenon of self-destruction. Nor can spoken language instruct a family in how to survive. As yet, we know no final answers. Hence, we must be satisfied with partial explanations, with guesses, and with the knowledge that each incident is different. True, there are common denominators but ultimately we must search for our own piece of the truth by living through the questions.

When you are searching for truth, Richard Felder, M.D. of Atlanta, recommends that: "Whatever you can find out about your feelings, or find inside yourself about the suicide, is the only way you can ever be real about it, Face it, what ever it is."

From the book *My Son...My Son...A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss of Suicide.* By Iris Bolton

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:

Susan Strassner, Mother of Sean
Veronica Meadows, Mother of Eddie
Maria Golchin, Mother of Justin
Lisa Shields, Mother of Aaron
Raymond Flores, Father of David



24th Annual Worldwide

Candle Lighting

December 14 @ 6:30 pm

Our 24th Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance program will take place on Sunday, December 14th.

Once again this candle lighting will be held indoors in the main Worship Center at the church where we hold our meetings, Bethlehem SCV.

In memory of our children, siblings, and grandchildren we will be selling luminaries as a small fundraiser for our chapter for \$10.00 each. These will line the walkway of our ceremony and are yours to take home afterwards. Please join us at the November meeting to decorate your very own personal luminary.

As in the past, we will have a photo/video presentation during our program. If you want to add your child, sibling, or grandchild's photo to our presentation, we must receive it by November 24. A digital photo is preferred and should be emailed to Alice at AL5Renolds@twc.com If you only have a hard copy, this can be mailed to Alice Renolds at 27949 Park Meadow Dr., Canyon Country, CA 91387. Please include your name, loved one's name, address and phone number so the photo can be returned. Please only one (1) photo per child.

*"When the support meeting ended,
my grief was just as heavy,
but emotionally I felt like I could fly.
I now knew that I wasn't crazy,
just morning and I began to look
forward to my monthly release"*

~Laurie, in memory of Skyler



Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas & Even New Year's Day

Once again the time of celebrations is upon us. Ghosts, goblins, and a wicked witch or two express our farewell to October and prepare us for turkey, family reunions, and pumpkin pie that mark Thanksgiving. Then comes a most cherished holiday—Christmas, followed by New Year's Day.

For many parents these occasions are almost unbearably difficult because our memories give us glimpses of excited costumed children voicing a timid "trick or treat" at neighbors' doors. We remember the fondness of a family Thanksgiving and chuckle at recalling best clothing smeared with the color of cranberry. But, perhaps most of all, we live again the search for that favorite story or book, or the vibrancy of a child's eyes drinking in the Christmas tree.

It is wonderful to remember, but in the first years at least, the pain overshadows most of the happiness we have in recall. But even for those along in years and growth from the time of bereavement, there is a longing that is forever barren, a hope that cannot be realized. The pain may be less wrenching, less totally consuming, but it is always there.

There are ways to help yourself if you wish, but it is very hard at first. You can curse the darkness, holding the pain close to you to protect what little seems to remain of you, and we who are also bereaved will understand, for we have gone that lonely road as well. Plan to give yourself lots of latitude and learn to tolerate your own behavior. If you spend all, one, or two of these days in tear, depression or yearning, it simply means that you are not ready to face the task that the holidays have become. Perhaps in the future you will.

When I think of my son Olin or the children we have all lost, I think of light and dreams, joy and laughter. There is no holiday memory or activity, beautiful present or well-intentioned relative that will compensate for the life, the light, or the splendid future forever lost to eternity. Yet, as I grow older in my grief, I also remember that my child's light and dreams gave birth to my own joy and laughter. These were gifts he gave me every holiday, together with limitless love that defies all time and space, even death itself.

So I have promised him a laugh back this Christmas, at least, and on the other holidays if I can. It's not a gift to put in a box or stocking and the packaging will still be the same old me. But he'll have my gift this year—a smile, a laugh, some joy from me. As I write this it seems very strange, for that gift is but a return of many he gave, colorful packages, invisible to all but me, nestled in splendor beneath our tree.

~Don Hackett
TCF Plymouth, MA



The Fall of Fall

What is it about the season that takes me back in time
Everything I do, I find you are on my mind.
Haunting dreams find me at night when I try to sleep
And every little detail is replayed,
and the sadness falls so deep.

Something about the close of summer
seems to bring it back
Making it so hard to move onward and stay on track.
Something about the dying and fading of the trees
Brings my heart to sorrow, with the falling of the leaves.

How I long to stop it, to keep the fall away
But time marches on, and summer just won't stay.
I know with the fall, winters not far behind.
Another lonely season, and the memories flood my mind.

I cry my tears of sorrow, and pray for spring to come
A rebirth of earth, and the warmth of the sun.
It makes the memories softer and gentler to recall
But now my life is saddened with the nearing of fall.

~Shelia Simmons
In Memory of her son Steven
3/24 - 10/19

Reprinted from TCF Atlanta Online Sharing

Halloween



It is here, this day of merriment
and children's pleasure.
Gremlins and goblins
and ghosties at the door of your house.

And the other children
come to the door of your mind.
Faces out of the past,
small ghosts with sweet, painted faces.
They do not shout.

Those children
who no longer march laughing
on cold Halloween night,
they stand at the door of your mind-
and you will let them in,
so that you can give them
the small gifts of Halloween-
a smile and a tear.

~Sascha Wagner



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

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

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



Barbara Rawson
In Loving Memory of her son:

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



Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
In Loving Memory of their son:

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



A Mother's Thoughts

YESTERDAY...

We dreamed of how our future would be,
Of times we'd share, my child and me.
Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears,
We'd stand together throughout the years.
A promise of what life should always be,
Of a child so dear, ever loving me.

TODAY...

My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief.
I search for answers, but find no relief.
The skies have darkened, no longer bright,
For my child is gone, forever from sight.
The dreams we shared can never be,
They're left to linger in my memory.

TOMORROW...

My heart will push aside this cloud
That darkens my life like a heavy shroud.
Once again I'll see the dawning light
And know my child's love still burns bright.
I'll remember the moments we both shared;
I'll remember our love and how we cared.
I'll remember my child now lives in me,
And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.

Memories

will bring you
love from the past,
courage in the present,
hope for the future.

