



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

July-August 2026

Volume 27, 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 any 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
Website: www.compassionatefriends-scv.org

MEETINGS

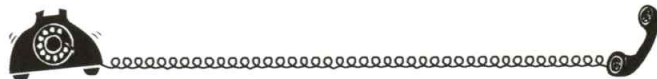
We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next two meetings are:

July 2, 2026
August 6, 2026

TIME: 7:00 PM

MEETING **Bethlehem SCV**

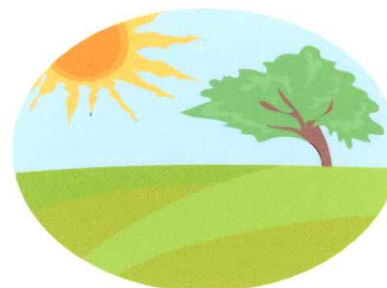
PLACE: **27265 Luther Dr. Room 5 (Second Driveway & through the gate)**
Canyon Country, CA 91351



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)
Steve Crittenden (Webmaster & Treasurer)
Mariacristina Leon (Remembrance Secretary)
Carolyn Conrad (New Member Pkts)
Lauren Drake (Data Base)
Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)
(661-478-2948)



Image

A breath of summertime
drifts from the rising sun,
comes from beyond the trees,
hums at your window ~

A breath of summertime
smiles at your dusty face,
weaves into cloud and light
visions remembered ~

A breath of summertime
touches your secret tears
brushes the tears away ~
(but not the image)

~Sascha Wagner
From: "For You From Sascha"

*"People will tell you to 'move on.'
Instead, think of your life as 'moving forward,'
WITH your loved one beside you in spirit and
in your heart. It's unthinkable to move on
without them. They are forever with you,
closer than you know."*

~Ashley Davis Bush



Little Things Mean A Lot

Recently, my husband and I drove up the California coast, reaching Moonshadow Beach just before sunset. Much to our amazement, throngs of people stood along the side of the road watching nature's grand finale, and we pulled over to join them. A distant fog bank distorted the sun, making it appear to change shapes during its final descent. One moment the sun took on the shape of a giant hourglass, the next, it looked like a pirate's treasure chest.

The instant the sun disappeared, the crowd applauded. I am ashamed to say it was the first time I had ever clapped for the sun. We clap for fireworks, actors, rock stars and athletes. Why not clap for God's handiwork?

My little granddaughter claps for butterflies. Every time she spots one in the garden, she squeals in delight and claps her hands. Noted playwright, Oliver Hailey, died while friends and family gathered around his deathbed in a standing ovation. What a wonderful tribute to a gifted man who spent a lifetime writing for the stage.

Hand clapping is indigenous to every culture in the world. In third century Japan, people greeted superiors by clapping their hands. Today the tradition continues in Shinto shrines as worshippers clap to greet the gods. The placing of the hands together symbolizes the meeting of yin and yang.

Research have proven that attending concerts and plays increases the life span. Is it only coincidence that activities encouraging applause are beneficial to our health?

As we learn to identify and accept the lasting gifts left behind by our loved ones, we gain new appreciation for things we once took for granted. Though we are filled with sadness and loneliness and wonder if we are ever going to smile again, we also have more reasons to clap our hands in appreciation and gratitude. One day, we'll even clap, our hands in joy.

~Margaret Brownley, Simi Valley, CA
Bereaved Parents USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

*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.*

~Linsey Henke

Fireworks



You used to run around with a sparkler in your hand,
pretending you were a Minute Man or
Patriot drummer.

It didn't matter, there was time for all.
You'd wrap a rag around your head and take your toy
drum, and tromped around the yard.

Whatever you were on those wonderful nights,
you loved it!

And we watched and laughed as you waved
your tiny flag,

Thinking maybe you were the one who really
understood what we celebrated.

Now the drum is gone and no one gets
sparklers any more.

The yard is quiet on the Fourth of July.
Do you still march and play the drum for others?

~Author unknown



Sunrise in August

Can it be true,
This is an easy morning?
The day escaping from
Its dark confinements,
While sun starts brushing
Earth with silken warmth.

No strain at all.

No hurry anywhere.

Can it be true

Your mind is whole and steady.

Now you remember things

As once they were

On other mornings, then,

And other days...

Can it be true

This is an easy morning?
Remembering does not hurt?

And you can close your eyes,

And you can see,

Can smile – at sunrise.

This is an easy morning.
Use it well

By Sascha Wagner,
from her book "The Sorrow and The Light"

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

July 2 - Meeting, "Sounds of Healing" Please bring your favorite song to share with the group.

August 6 - Meeting, "Stones of Remembrance" Come paint a stone in remembrance of your child/grandchild.



You Are Braver

You are braver than you will ever know. You may not realize it but you are valiant, magnificent and strong in spirit. You are courageous. You have endured and somehow survived the most horrific injury that anyone in this life can suffer. Your child has died. But somehow you have miraculously found the strength to still breathe in and out. And after a while, you managed to put one foot in front of the other and have tried to the best of your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it. A world you must step out into and face every day without any outward signs that you are altered for life. If you were to wear your most grievous wound displayed on the outside of your body like permanent stigmata, would people recoil from the sight or would they perhaps offer compassion and understanding for your piteous condition? That's why you are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly injured you are, you are still doing your best to function and participate in this life. I want to challenge you to be brave. Please muster all of the strength and courage you have and walk in the door of a Compassionate Friends Meeting. We'll help you from there. We care. We understand. We too have the same wounds as you. We need not walk alone.

~Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo-Area, TX



*Thank you so very much for your generous
Newsletter Renewal Donations,
they are greatly appreciated!*

Debbie Gardner in memory of her daughter Mindy

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:
Omar & Angelica Monroy/Rua, parents of Paulo



Book Review

Beyond Tears: Living After Losing a Child

By Ellen Mitchell
St Martin's Press 2004

Nine mothers lose their children, find each other and share their stories. The women became friends after meeting at a support group. Ellen Mitchell has organized the thoughts and words of these nine bereaved mothers (and to a lesser extent their husbands) into a useful and instructive presentation of what it is like to be on this grief journey after a child dies. This book, unlike others, does not dwell on how each child died, rather focuses on the difficulties that followed for these women, their spouses and their living children. Each has a slightly different take on such issues as: Holidays and birthdays, Belief in an afterlife, Laughter, Gratitude, Redefining themselves and the Value of each other's friendship. This effort will aid the newly bereaved as well as those in their third or fourth year. Veterans will find the comments made by these women useful to share with rookies when in group.

Compassionate Tears

*I cried in my car, and was ignored
I cried in church, and was pitied.
I cried at work, and was shunned.
I cried at home, and was hushed.
I cried at The Compassionate Friends,
And others share their tissues & tears.*

~Nona Walser

VACATIONS



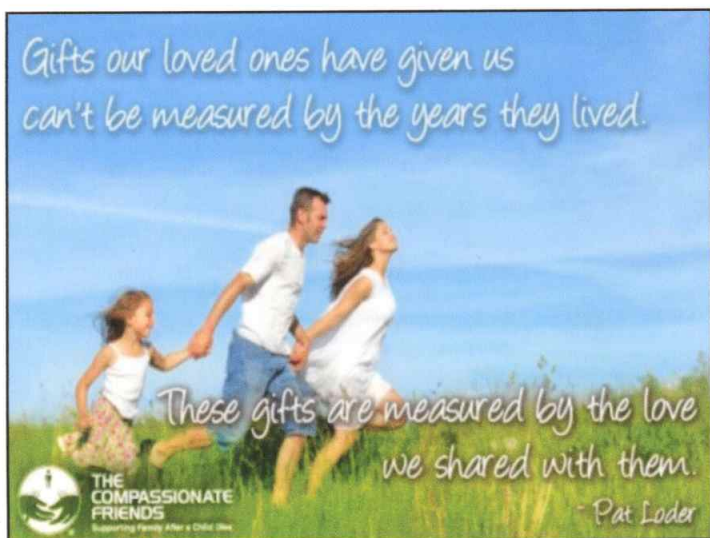
Vacation time can be painful for bereaved parents. Caught up with normal demands of making a living or keeping a household going, we have less time to think than we do on vacations, especially the "take it easy" kind-at a hideaway, tucked away somewhere.

In the summers following Tricia's death, I found vacations could bring a special kind of pain. We avoided going to places where we had vacationed with her. At one time, I thought Williamsburg might be off my list forever since we had a very happy time together there. I tried it one summer three years later and found that she walked the cobbled streets with me. Now that nine years have passed and the pain has eased, maybe the happy memories we shared in Williamsburg can heighten the pleasure of another visit there.

For the first few years after Tricia's death, we found fast-paced vacations at places we had never been before, to be the best. The stimulation of new experiences in new places with new people refreshed us and sent us home more ready to pick up our grief work. That is not to say when we did something or saw something that Tricia would have enjoyed, we didn't mention her. We did, but it seemed less painful than at home.

One caution: Do allow enough time for sleep; otherwise, an exhausted body can depress you. We've said it many times: YOU HAVE TO FIND YOUR OWN WAY, YOUR OWN PEACE. Let vacation time be another try at that; but do give yourself a break in choosing the time and locale where that can best be accomplished. Don't be afraid of change-it can help with your re-evaluation of life.

~Elizabeth Estes,
TCF Augusta, GA



Reflections in Sand and Time



I looked across the lake, then onto the sand, wishing I was still standing there holding your hand.

Sand castles, buckets and shovels flashed into my mind, as I remembered all those precious memories you left behind.

Tiny footprints took me many, many years back in time, but of those I looked at- yours I couldn't find.

But as I stood there going so far back in the sand, I almost could feel you holding my hand.

~Linda T.
TCF York, PA



Summer Delight

Where is the child who skipped through the sprays of summer rain and laughed his way into my heart? Where is the boy who climbed my trees and spied on me from behind the leaves? Where is the child with the suntanned legs who ran Fourth-of-July races in green parks? Where is the sleepy child who wrapped his arms around my neck and said, "When I grow up, I gonna marry you, Mom?" He's here.

He twines around our past, around my future, and takes me back home, and makes me young again as sure as summer comes. A suntanned spirit with an impish grin still whispers in my ear that stars are not stars at all but lightening bugs he's captured in a jar. In his youth he's my summer's glow, the sunshine in my garden, my comfort on long, hot, summer nights of remembering.

Where is the child that once played among my summer flowers? He darts and runs away as I idly dream of yesterday, at once elusive yet so near. Oh, I'm sure he's here. I'm sure I saw him just a minute ago. Or was it just a touch of summer madness that made me think I'd greeted him?

Oh, where is that child of summer gladness? His laughter slides down summer rainbows and captures me with unbound glee. His summer brownness runs barefoot on my heart. With sun-bleached hair, he smiles at me from photos from summers past, and I remember love.

~Fay Harden
Posted on TCF National Website
May 31, 2019



Love Gifts



Were Received From:

Juanita & Robert Arvizu
In Loving Memory of their son:

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



*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. 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 Marsh
TCF's "We Need Not Walk Alone" Magazine
Spring 2008

PEOPLE SAY

*you don't know what
you've got till it's gone.*

TRUTH IS,

*you knew what you had.
you just never thought
you'd lose it.*

-AUTHOR UNKNOWN



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 Diane at our meeting or mail it to Diane Briones at 19544 Babington St., Canyon Country, 91351. You can also email the info to tcf.santaclarita@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!

*"It isn't for the moment you are struck
you need courage,
but for the long uphill climb back to
sanity and faith and security"*

~Anne Morrow Linbergh

"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
Sean Tessier	7/25	Patricia Vassallo	Steven Sprague	8/4	Marie Sprague
Michael Lake	7/20	Marie Whitehead	Eric Rodriguez	8/11	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez
			Nicholas Colley	8/22	Scott & Jade Colley



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

July

August

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Bradley McBurney	7/18	Tammy Gauld	Daniel McAlpine	8/29	Elaine McAlpine
Bailey Haney (Grandchild)	7/11	Myra Kulick	Matthew Weiss	8/18	William Weiss
Melissa Lind	7/6	Marcy Torrey	Sky Schermerhorn	8/30	Robin Walker
Kevin Perlstein	7/13	Robert & Kathleen Lencki			



Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



Yesterday

You were here and I took it for granted that you would always be here. Telling you I loved you and was proud of you seemed unimportant. There would be time for that when we were older—when we fought less and talked more.

Today

I know that time will never come, and I will never have the chance to say things face-to-face. So I write them and think them and hope you know I mean them now and have always felt them.

Tomorrow

Each day the pain and regrets of things left unsaid get easier to deal with. I have begun to realize that you knew how I felt because you felt the same way. And as more tomorrows turn into yesterdays, I will find peace in that knowledge. Someday, somewhere, we will meet again and I will have my chance then.

~Shannon Odessa Stiener
TCF Lowell, IN