



Newsletter of the San Diego Chapter of "TCF"

The Compassionate Friends

A non profit self-help organization for families who are grieving the death of a child.



These pages Dedicated with Love to:

September /
October
2016

Issue 127

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Cynthia Lee Kessler



Alexander Nicholas Model

*Location, see
p. 3*

Next Meeting

Wednesday
Sept. 7th

Wednesday
Oct. 5th

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥

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Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
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Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org/

Donations and Love Gifts

Dedications and Love Gifts go towards the cost of: printing and mailing of this Newsletter; outreach activities to the newly bereaved; and other expenses necessary to continue our chapter in San Diego. These donations are tax deductible. Our sincerest thanks to all who honor their children in this way.

- ♥ **Thelma & Gerald Model — In Loving Memory of their grandson Alexander.**
 - ♥ **Gordon R.Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia.**
-



2017 National Conference in Orlando, Florida

The Arizona Conference in Scottsdale is over. A number of San Diego Chapter members attended. To them, the meetings, the classes, the association with other attendees, all very worthwhile. Looking forward to next year

Locally.

Special thanks to:

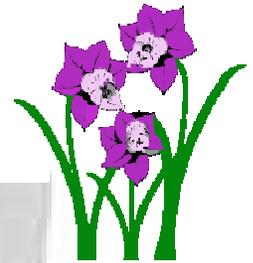
The facilitators assist members and guests in the conversation circles at our meetings.

The Clays for providing the “survival tool boxes”, at their own expense and making them available to us.

To the steering committee members and others for donating so much time and energy in behalf of our local Chapter.



Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered
September & October
We remember the families of:



Birthdays

Ronald Paul Jones, born 9-1
Creta (CJ) Smith, born 9-4
Dan Gerald Bruce, born 9-6
Klay Budz, born 9-7
Megan Ashley Landis, born 9-8
Lindsey Faye Whelchel, born 9-8
Blake Christopher Whelchel, born 9-9
Vincent Glen Ruddy, born 9-10
George Brers IV, born 9-13
Guy Charles Green, born 9-14
Brian Michael Bennett, born 9-19
Vinny Palermo, born 9-21
Aubrey Apodaca, born 9-24
Brent Foster Whelchel, born 9-24
Lucas Daniel Giaconelli, born 9-30
Michelle Weihe, born 10-1
Kristina Michelle Bennett, born 10-07
Mark Metz, born 10-7
Bianca Ciara Santanna, born 10-8
Joshua Michael Jensen, born 10-10
Brian James Gillis, born 10-11
Kathleen Bohanon, born 10-12
Jennifer Ann Donnell, born 10-12
Nathaniel Poteat, born 10-12
Skip Anaya-Summers, born 10-16
Renee Eleonor Dawson, born 10-17
Jennifer Ann Greenwald, born 10-24
Pamela Broderick, born 10-24
David Sullivan, born 10-25
Brad Huska, born 10-26
Michael Dylkiewicz, born 10-28
Leonard Valadez, born 10-31

Anniversaries

Cynthia Lee Kessler, died 9-6
Jered Dillard, died 9-18
Alexander Nicholas Model, died 9-15
Ryan McDonough, died 9-3
Jason Lee Hansen, died 9-13
Matthew Steven Spiewak, died 9-9
Collin Barnes, died 9-13
Terest Bowers, died 9-15
Nicole Clark, died 9--3
Ron Laverty, died 9-16
Stephen William Anderson, died 9-19
Blake Christopher Whelchel, died 9-4
Michelle Weihe, died 9-24
Lucas Owen Small, died 9-13
Aubrey Apodaca, died 9-28
William Scott Virdee, died 9-27
Spencer Clay, died 9-30
Julie Elizabeth Richardson, died 10-21
Rory David Boyer, died 9-28
Kai Wright, died 10-9
Emil Ian de la Barrera, died 10-18
Amanda Harrington, died 10-6
Matthew Scott Lewis, died 10-5
Brittany Dawn Williams, died 10-29
Lawrence O'Brien, died 10-3
Davey Johnson, died 10-30

Ralphs Community Contributions Program

A Reminder From Ralphs: September is Upon us Again, Time to re-register.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of Ralphs. With your help and the support of your members, family and friends, Ralphs is proud to report that we are committed to giving \$2 Million during the next 12 months through our Community Contributions Program.

Our new program year begins on September 1, 2016. Your organization is still active and will remain active in the program. Your supporters, however, will continue donating only through August 31, 2016.

Participants can start registering for the new term on September 1st 2016. To ensure your organization continues to receive the benefits of the program, your supporters will need to register and/or re-register as quickly as possible on or after that date at www.ralphs.com.

It is also extremely important that we have up-to-date organization contact information. Email us at community.programs@ralphs.com with any changes to your primary or secondary contact on the organizations' account.

Please pass the following information on to all your supporters, family and friends who would like to participate:

Participants are required to register for the new term online at www.ralphs.com or by calling us at 800-443-4438 starting September 1, 2016. Even if your participants registered as recently as June, July or August 2016, -they are required to register again beginning September 1st.

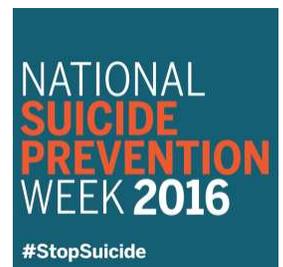
NEW THIS YEAR!! As of September 1, 2016 the Scan Bar letters are no longer valid. The Scan Bar letters will no longer work at the register which makes this a great time for all your participants to create an online account or re-enroll at their online account. While online, it's a wonderful opportunity to learn about all the savings we offer.

For your convenience, step-by-step website registration instructions can be found at www.ralphs.com. click on Community, click on Community Contributions, click on 'Enroll Now'. If you don't have computer access, please call us at 1-800-443-4438 for assistance.

National Suicide Prevention Week:

September 5-11, 2016

<https://afsp.org/campaigns/national-suicide-prevention-week-2016/>





The Compassionate Friends
San Diego, CA Chapter
Supporting families after a child dies.

Annual Memorial Balloon Release Picnic

Sunday, September 25, 2016

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch 12:00 Noon, Balloon Release 1:00 PM



Admiral Baker Field

2400 Admiral Baker Rd.

San Diego, CA 92120

Bring your family for a day of memories and friendship

Please bring your child's favorite side dish to share

The Compassionate Friends will provide the meat dish and drinks

No Pets Please



Directions: I-15 to Friars Road. Head East for about one mile

Make a left turn onto Santo Road

Take immediate right onto Admiral Baker Road

Go downhill into the parking lot

Autumn Memories

My son and I always enjoyed the autumn season. Yes, when we lived in the cold zone, we knew that winter's winds and snows were on the way. But, yet, we took time to enjoy the beautiful array of colors that nature gave us as a final salute to the growing season.

Todd and I raked leaves in the autumn. I had purchased a home in a town on the Mississippi River bluffs; the home had been built in the 1860s and I am sure some of the trees were well over 50 years old. The leaves would fall and we would rake. We made a game of it. Sometimes his best friend, Allen, would come over and help. The boys would jump into the piles and laugh with delight. We'd create a big pile and rake it to the concrete so that it could be burned. I can still see Todd laughing and dancing around that fire. His pure childhood joy was contagious.

Todd and I loved to look at the changing leaves along the bluffs of the river. We would drive on weekends and find the best view. Then we'd park and marvel at nature's wonder. The big bluffs, the turning leaves, the eagles soaring above us. Ducks flying south...even the occasional group of geese overhead...honking, honking as they journeyed to a warmer climate.

The light is different in the autumn...it's diffused somehow. It's different than the light in any other season. Autumn sun was our favorite light. It seemed less harsh, more forgiving, gentler in a strange sort of way. That was another time and another place.

Now in the autumn I remember all the special times I shared with my child. Looking at leaves, collecting leaves, raking leaves.....we did this together, just the two of us. "Mom, when are we going to go look at leaves?" Todd would ask. That was my cue to load up some soft drinks and sandwiches and head out on the first sunny Saturday. We'd repeat this ritual until the leaves had all fallen and it was time to rake.

When we moved to the Houston area, Todd was 12, and we talked about the seasons. He told me about his great memories of leaves and drives and time together. He said he would miss autumn with me. That made me feel good. These were memories that we shared, of a time when it was just Todd and me for those special moments. Looking back, I am so glad that I spent the time to make memories. I thought I was making memories for my child, but in fact, I was

making memories for us both. And now those memories are my memories.....good memories....memories that I will cherish always.

Here it is autumn again. Soon Todd will be gone five years. The memories are flooding back: the first day of each school each year, the changes as he grew to become a man. High school, college, graduate school....all began in the autumn. Autumn marks the beginning of many good memories for me. I listen as the school bus stops in front of our house to pick up today's children. Once in a while I go to the door and watch them load up, chatting with each other as they take their seats. I think of my 12 year old son, getting on that bus in front of our home for the first time: the first day of school in Houston. And for a moment, just a fleeting moment, I think I can see him sitting at a window seat, waving at me. Waving goodbye.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

"...a bear wedged in great tightness."

"In a tape called, 'To Touch a Grieving Heart' there is a wonderful little reminder of the *Winnie the Pooh* story by A. A. Milne. You may recall that Winnie goes to visit Rabbit and eats too much honey. Coming out of Rabbit's hole, he gets stuck tight – so tight he can't even sigh. He asks his friends to stay with him, read him a story, and offer words of comfort...and thus to help 'a bear wedged in great tightness.'

Notice that Pooh does not ask to be pulled out of the hole, he asks only for company so he is not alone. I think Grief is like being 'a bear wedged in great tightness.' And, while we cannot make the grief go away for each other, The Compassionate Friends starts and stops with the core idea that we will be there for each other; that 'we need not walk alone.' "

Opening remarks of the late
Richard Edler's keynote speech at the
1996 TCF National Conference

Dear Dr. Gloria,

Last night I went to my first Compassionate Friends meeting. During the sharing session I told the group that I was having trouble facing my son's mental illness and his death. For several years I have worked with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) where I learned about coping with our son's schizophrenia. I thought I had it under control. Then the call came. It was a policeman telling me Ricky was dead. He was speeding over 100 miles per hour, lost control of the car and hit a tree. It has been three months and I seem to have lost all of my coping skills. I cry often, drink too much, and obsess over what more I could have done to save our son. While Ricky was alive I worked tirelessly to help him and others cope with their mental illness and I felt we were making progress. Now as I look at his death I wonder if this was suicide by car, a last desperate effort to escape his pain. Can you help?

Sincerely,
Ron

Dear Ron,

I am very sorry to hear about Ricky's death, but I am glad you found The Compassionate Friends and I hope you will continue to attend meetings and visit their Internet Chat Rooms. NAMI is a wonderful organization and it sounds like you found that making sense of any loss is made easier by giving service. Three months is very early and I suggest that the service you need



to give at this time is to yourself. The first year following the death is the most difficult as you have to go through the first of everything without him. Be patient with yourself. Crying is part of the process; I often hear men say that they wish they could cry more. Obsessive thoughts of how you could have made a difference are natural. Journaling, sharing feelings and getting light exercise are good ways to calm these thoughts and settle your mind. You should avoid drinking excessively and self-medicating as they dampen emotions making it difficult to face the reality of your loss. As time passes the questions of how and why he died will take on less importance, as in the end it is not how Ricky died, but how he lived and the memories of him that make you smile and rekindle your love.

Also, please visit us at www.opentohope.com.

*God Bless,
Dr. Gloria*

Dr. Gloria Horsley, MFC, CNS, PhD, is the founder and president of the Open to Hope Foundation an internationally known grief expert, a psychotherapist, and bereaved parent. Gloria cohosts the Internet radio show *Open to Hope*, at www.opentohope.com, and has authored a number of books and articles. She will be answering your questions related to loss, grief, and recovery for the bereaved parent/grandparent. Please send your questions to: Dr. Gloria Horsley, c/o The Compassionate Friends, PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

The following article originally appeared on the Website of TLC Group
< <http://fohnix.metronet.com/~tlc/> >, which specializes in publications for transition, loss and change.

Share the Pain

Guest Writer - Bill Chadwick

I was watching the news tonight when they announced that the 27 year old son of Bill Cosby had been murdered today. I felt that now familiar sickening in my gut again...as one more young person beat us adults to the grave. Such a senseless waste...and such pain.

They read a statement from Mr. and Mrs. Cosby which said in part "..., this is a tragedy that is very difficult to share with anyone." The death of a loved one is such a personal thing...a direct wound to the heart. His statement is so full of truth. In fact, it may be impossible to share the loss completely with anyone...but I think we have to try.

When my 21-year-old son Michael was killed three years ago by a drunk driver, the pain was so intense...so incredibly powerful...that I just didn't think I would survive. It is a miracle that I ever did. I remember feeling so alone...so completely alone. People were hovering around me day and night...yet I felt so far away from them. My pain was a very personal pain...one I knew they could never comprehend. I was right I think...they didn't or couldn't understand. It was that realization which caused me to seek out someone...anyone...who did understand. Was it a coincidence that I had recently signed on to the Internet?

I found a place on the Internet called "alt.support.grief." It's one of the Usenet Newsgroups. When I arrived, there were only a few "posts" there, but enough that I could sense the mood of the group. I was totally new to the Net...and had never posted to a Newsgroup before. It took a lot of courage...but I mustered enough to type: "My name is Bill...and my 21

year old son Michael was killed in a car crash on October 23, 1993. My life has been forever changed."

I have been typing that same message now for over three years...and it is still true today. Michael's life...and his death...forever changed me. But...that day...when I shared my pain for the first time on ASG...my life changed even more. I felt some relief almost immediately...even before people had responded. As the responses to my message (back then, only a couple!)

began to get posted...my heart warmed. I had no way of knowing then just how important these precious people would be to me. In the end...they literally saved my life.

Something powerful happens when we write about our grief and share it. Even before it is shared...just the writing of it seems to help. I think it helps to move us out of our denial. Somehow, seeing my own words in print helped me to center on the reality of Michael's death. But if writing it is helpful...sharing it is miraculous!! As I always say on ASG..."A miracle happens when we share our pain here. I don't know why it works...but it does!"

I remember hearing some years ago about an experiment conducted at an eastern university. It seems they lined up 50 barefooted students and had them come one at a time and place one bare foot into a bucket of ice. They timed each student to see how long he could keep his foot in the bucket before the pain overwhelmed him. After each student was clocked, they lined them up again...this time with a partner to stand next to them...holding their hand. On average, each student was able to keep their foot in the bucket twice as long as when they were alone!

The obvious conclusion that the scientist drew from this experiment was that somehow the students could endure more pain when they were not alone. I think perhaps the scientist may have missed the most important factor in the formula. You see...the student holding the participant's hand...had his foot in the bucket only minutes before. He knew what it felt like!!

Talking to a therapist...writing in a journal...sharing with a relative...all of these are positive ways to express our feelings of grief. But...there is something very special...very powerful...about sharing with someone who has been down the path you are walking. Find them at a Hospice grief group...at "The Compassionate Friends"...or right here on the Internet...just find them. And once you have found them...don't let them go until you have told them EVERYTHING! It will be a big favor you are doing for yourself...and an even greater favor you will be doing for them!

Love & Peace,
Bill

"In this life we cannot do great things...We can only do small things with great love." – Mother Theresa

(Continued next page)

(Share The Pain, continued)

My email address: zoom@zoom.baton-rouge.la.us

My homepage is a memorial to Michael. There is extensive info on grief there and great links to other sites on grief. Please check it out!

<http://zoom.baton.rouge.la.us/>

Online Grief Support Group: A warm and compassionate place...where we share the common bond of grief. A miracle in my life!

[news:alt.support.grief](http://news.alt.support.grief)

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My Witch and My Angel

For Zoë Halloween is just about as good as it gets. Not much in my daughter's world beats candy, costumes, friends, make-up, and staying up late even on a school night. Life at age six can be gloriously simple.

But I don't know much of what my son Max thought of Halloween. When he died at age two, he only had one real "trick-or-treat" to his credit. That year—1987—I dressed him in a pumpkin costume and we traipsed to a few neighbors. I took far too many pictures. Max was a fiend for sweets and with the candy ration lifted for the evening, he had to be living well.

I imagine that year would have been his last dressed as a mommy-pleasing pumpkin. At three or four I knew he would demand Ninja or pirate costumes; I would have laughingly bought them and maybe even the plastic sword. I would have let him paint grotesque stitches across his nose and wear fangs that glowed in the dark.

Instead, this is Zoë's year to cast aside the girly version of Max's pumpkin cap. The beloved pink princess frills and red nail polish are being exchanged for a witch hat and black glue-on fingernails sharpened into talons. For the first time, she wants to be Scary and Ugly. With mahogany lipstick and smoky eyes, she will fly out the door in less than a month to cross one more threshold that her brother did not.

I can see the evening now. As I assemble face paints on the counter, I will take a deep breath — the same one I take every year at every holiday and milestone. With my unsteady hand I will design witchy warts and create wrinkles on Zoë's perfect face. I will declare her the Scariest and Ugliest of All.

But as I help my little witch into her costume, I know my eyes will fill with tears. I will think about the years that were supposed to be: a young boy as Dracula, a 13 year-old teen in baggy clothes escorting his little witch-sister down the block. Who would he be now, the toddler we knew, the boy we lost? What would our life be like if the scary things were still just make-believe?

Zoë will see my tears, but she won't be alarmed: in our family's emotional lexicon, sad and happy often go together and crying is as OK as laughing. She will ask me why I'm sad and I will tell her the truth: I am thinking about Max and wishing he could be here.

And although she is now the mean and fierce Witch Zoë, she will nod her head with understanding. Her plastic nails will lightly graze my arm as she reaches to pat me. Suddenly the frown on her face will disappear and she repeats what has become her annual Halloween revelation: "Mommy, it's OK. Don't forget that Max can go 'trick-or-treat' as an angel." She describes a glittering figure, luminous wings aflutter, giant treat bag at the ready. I smile at the idea and the moment passes.

Later, I light the candle in the pumpkin and watch Zoë skip next door to show off her costume. She heads up the sidewalk, stopping halfway to turn and wave to me. She makes her scariest face and yells, "Mom—take my picture!" I raise my camera and look through the viewfinder. As the flash glows briefly in the dusk, I see a beautiful angel standing in the shadows beside her. But this angel doesn't wear white and his wings have been clipped. I am sure he never had a golden halo. He is a small chubby boy with a jack-o-lantern face on his tummy and chocolate on his fingers. It is 1987 and he is having a really great Halloween.

Just like his sister.

©1999 by Mary Clark
In memory of Max
TCF, Sugarland, TX

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① OUR LOCAL WEB SITE

Visit the San Diego Chapter homepage:
www.sdtcf.org
Email: leaders@sdtcf.org

The San Diego chapter home page has information about our chapter and links to more grief resources.

TCF Regional Coordinator
Olivia Garcia 818-736-7380
oliviabgarcia1@gmail.com

① OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES

MADD 858-564-0780
Empty Cradle 619-595-3887
Jenna Druck Foundation 619-294-8000
Survivors of Suicide 619-482-0297
info@SOSLsd.org
Bereaved Parents of the USA
www.bereavedparentsusa.org

Parents of Murdered Children National 888-818-POMC
Local 619-281-3972

Alive Alone - for now childless parents www.alivealone.org

① INFORMATION ON THE NET

Visit the TCF national homepage:
www.compassionatefriends.org

The national home page is filled with information and grief resources on-line. A "chat" room for on-line discussion with bereaved families is available.

Chat Room schedule:

Mon 9-10 pm EST: General Bereavement
Mon 10-11pm EST: Men's Chat
Tue 9-10 pm EST: Pregnancy and Infant Death
Thur 8-9 pm EST: No surviving children
Thur 9-10 pm EST: Siblings (Minimum age is 13)
Thur 10-11 pm: Grieving Alone (Single parents)

member web/e-mail

<http://www.RickPieramico.com>
Charlene Tate caricat83@hotmail.com
Elene Bratton jamiesjoy@simplynet.com
www.jamiesjoy.org
Tami Carter haley1@san.rr.com

TCF INFORMATION PACKAGE

If you would like to send an information package on TCF to someone you think could benefit, (either for themselves or others) phone 619-583-1555. Leave a message with your name and phone number and the name and full address of the person you would like to receive the package.

Be a compassionate friend

Our Lost Children's Photos for Newsletter

The recommended donation for your child's photo in our newsletter is \$30. Children's pictures will be in color. Donations and love gifts are always greatly appreciated.

WE WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS



Deadline for submission to the
November / December 2016

Issue of
The Compassionate Friend is

October 10, 2016

We warmly welcome your contributions, both original and inspirational writings. Please indicate sources of any non-original texts.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies
San Diego County Chapter

11582 Fury Lane #118, El Cajon, CA 92019

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September / October 2016

Love Gifts

Donations and love gifts in memory of your loved one enable us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and help defray newsletter and mailing expenses. Please indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter. When making a donation, please specify the San Diego chapter. Make your checks payable to:

The Compassionate Friends, San Diego Chapter, 11582 Fury Ln. #118. El Cajon, CA. 92019

From: _____ In Memory Of: _____

TCF The Compassionate Friends *newsletter application*

New Address

New subscription

Remove from list

Please send newsletter by regular mail.

By email, address _____

Your name: _____

Child's Full Name: _____

Address _____

Birth date: _____

City: _____

Date of death: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Cause: _____

Home phone: () _____

Your relationship to child: _____

Siblings/Ages: _____

Yes, I would like my child's name to be listed on the anniversary pages of the chapter newsletter

Yes, I would like my child's name to be listed on the anniversary pages of the chapter web site
If you have lost more than one child, please use a separate form for each child.