



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:



January / February 2018

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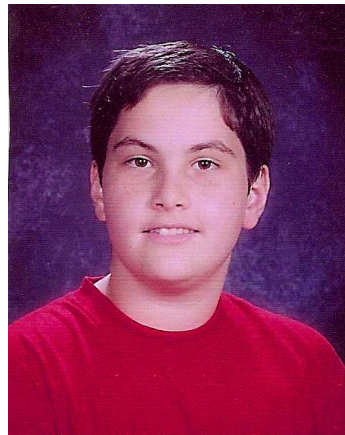
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Next Meeting

Wednesday January 3rd

Wednesday February 7th



Jason Wilshe



Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley



Rory David Boyer

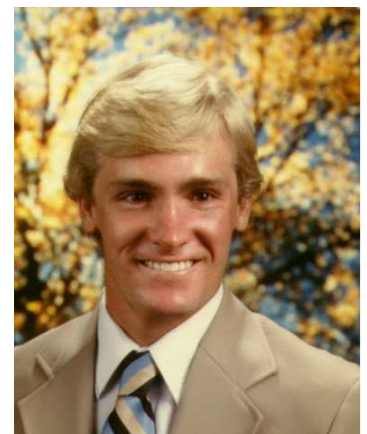
♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Daniel R. Keyser



Todd Almeida Cutler



Lawrence Wayne Hennessee

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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.

- ♥ David & Ruth Keyser — In Loving Memory of their son Daniel. "Love You & Miss You with every Beat of My Heart." Always & Forever, Your Mama & Brother Patrick.
- ♥ Richard & Gloria Selby — In Loving Memory of their son Todd. "Through my tears, I can see your smile and hear your laugh. I miss you so much, son." Love You, Mom
- ♥ Sandra & Larry Hennessee — In Loving Memory of their son Lawrence.
- ♥ Lynn & Norval Lyon — In Loving Memory of their son Rory.
- ♥ Elene Bratton — In Loving Memory of her son Jamie.
- ♥ Karen & Ken Wilshe — In Loving Memory of their son Jason. "Fifteen years since you went home. We love and miss you, Jason."
- ♥ Yolanda Nerio — In Loving Memory of all children gone too soon.
- ♥ Lisa & Del Hohman — In Loving Memory of their son Darryl. "Happy 46th Birthday"

If I Had MY Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise over again
 I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later
 I'd finger paint more, and point fingers less.
 I'd do less correcting and more connecting
 I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes.
 I would care to know less and know to care more.
 I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
 I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
 I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
 I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
 I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often and affirm much more.
 I'd model less about the love of power
 And more about the power of love

by Diane Loomans from "Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul"

Submitted by Barbara Lopez In Memory of Vince
 January 31, 1958 - October 12, 2017



\

Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered
January & February
We remember the families of:



Birthdays

Katie R. Dix, born 1-2
Darryl Charles Hohman, born 1-4
Madison Renee White, born 1-5
Stephen William Anderson, born 1-6
Lawrence Wayne Hennessee, born 1-6
Azja K. Ostrye, born 1-8
Julie Elizabeth Richardson, born 1-8
Yehudit Sherman, born 1-8
Philip Glynn Murphy, born 1-15
Mark E. Gannon, born 1-15
Philip Glynn Murphy, born 1-15
Daniel R. Keyser, born 1-16
Justin Scott, born 1-23
Rory David Boyer, born 1-26
Riley Gail Horgan, born 1-27
Larry Stauffer, born 1-31
Cari Tate, born 2-3
Frank Palmer, born 2-5
Joshua Linzy Fogel, born 2-8
Andres Saputo, born 2-12
Justin Knapp, born 2-13
Leticia Raimer, born 2-18
Spencer Clay, born 2-19
Todd Almeida Cutler, born 2-28

Anniversaries

Dee Louse Hochstetler, died 1-1
Matthew Raimer, died 1-1
Lisa Stoefen, died 1-3
Lisa Marie Stoefen, died 1-3
Julie Hart, died 1-4
Madison Renee White, died 1-6
Matthew C. Colbert, died 1-9
Renee Eleonor Dawson, died 1-12
Cari Tate, died 1-13
Matthew Beaver, died 1-14
Chad Eugene Clausen, died 1-17
Jason Wilshe, died 1-25
Sara Elizabeth Chandler, died 1-25
Aymee Sofia Garcia, died 1-27
Lucas Daniel Giaconelli, died 1-29
Brittany Grell, died 2-3-2009
Philip Glynn Murphy, died 2-7
Milton (Danny) Smith, died 2-10
Ginger Melania Walker, died 2-11
Damian "Damo" Reid Carver, died 2-12
David John Merritt, died 2-14
Heather A. Avilez, died 2-14
Jana A. Warda Schott, died 2-15
Angela Scarbrough, died 2-22
Rosa Griffith, died 2-23

Our Annual Candle Lighting

Our annual Candle Lighting in December was most inspiring. Beautiful luminarias lined our walkway. Special readings, the slide presentation, picture boards and photographs of our children, gone too soon, and the Love In Motion Signing Choir enriched the program for the evening. When all candles were lit, and each child's name announced, the song "Tonight I Hold This Candle" by Alan Pedersen, was performed by the Signing Choir.

As the program progressed, we had to put up extra chairs again and again. After the program, delicious foods were furnished with a cheerful heart by our members and many of our guests. A huge thank you to all who helped and worked so hard in bringing us the program. Extra special thanks to those who supported our chapter with love gifts and donations. It is greatly appreciated.



We had a very special treat as Director BJ Jensen and several members of Love In Motion Signing Choir inspired us with several numbers which were immensely enjoyed. We thank them for visiting with us and sharing their talents. "This Butterfly Song" performed at closing of Candle Lighting. Photo above courtesy of Susan Wen.

To Start a New Year

If I can concentrate on the
moral and spiritual side of
the holidays
I can make it through.

If I can absorb the love and
warmth that was the
beginning
I can give love back.

If I can share the grief and
love that is in me
through these holidays
I can start a new year.

Tom Spray
TCF Ventura, CA

The Valentines of Yesterday

In my lifetime I have received many Valentines. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, school friends, boyfriends, good friends, acquaintances and my husband have showered me over the years with lovely Valentines which I have so appreciated. The tradition of declaring friendship and love on Valentine's Day is a very fond memory.

However, the sweetest Valentines I have ever received are from my son. From the first days in nursery school when my son made a hand plaque and a drawing on construction paper to the final Valentine in 2002, I have cherished these gifts of love from my only child. I have kept every Valentine my son ever made for me or bought for me. I have every Valentine gift he ever gave me. These are the treasures that remind me how special a parent's love truly is. There is no love to compare with the unconditional love we give our children. I think my son knew that nobody in the world would love him as much as his mother did. Yet, he also knew that he would love his children in just this same way. This unconditional parent's love that we give our children is the most precious love in life. It is always our hope that they, too, will find the joy of this love with their children.

When our child dies, we cling to our unconditional love as we feel the anguish of a final separation on this earthly plane and a tsunami of betrayal as the devastation of this incomprehensible loss sweeps over us. The pain is real. It is physical, emotional, psychological and forever embedded on our psyche. Yet, without that unconditional love, there would be no pain. Who among us would trade the most infinitely rewarding love and the subsequent pain of loss for a life of lukewarm relationships?

And so, as Valentine's Day once again comes into my life, I will look back at this love, at the good times, the wonderful handmade childhood Valentine cards and gifts and the carefully selected cards of adulthood that my son gave to me. His words, his love, his appreciation for all that we had shared as mother and child will be reflected in these treasures. There will be tears, certainly, but these are tempered with the many wonderful, sweet memories of my son and his life. It is these sweet memories which sustain me, give me hope, and bring me gratitude for all that was given to me. My son is forever in my heart. He is with me every day and every night, and especially, he is with me on Valentine's Day.

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

Whenever I Think of You

Whenever I think of you
I see sunshine
blue skies
your smile.

Whenever I think of you
I hear your laughter
your voice saying,
"Mom, I'm home! What's for dinner?"

Whenever I think of you
I remember
swimming at Copley Y
karate at Dallas Y
bowling leagues at Parkway
volleyball with the UCSD gang.

Whenever I think of you
I hear your
Tim Allen expressions!!!
pidgin English and making your
computer sizzle.

Whenever I think of you
I remember
Grossmont College graduation with
an A S. Degree in Health Science
in Cardiovascular Technology.

Whenever I think of you
I will always remember your
Love, kindness, hugs and humor;
your smile and happy personality.
Your patience, wit and discipline
and how you 'hit the books'!!

Until we meet again...
Missing and loving you always♥♥
Mom & Dad
Lisa & Del Hohman
1-4-72 --- 4-9-97



VALENTINE SENT TO HEAVEN

Angels come swiftly, hurry to our side.
 Carry our hearts back with you, to our children in heaven now reside.
 Carry them gently, handle them with care
 And take them to their sides, and gently lay them there.
 Whisper to them of our love, and our longing hearts
 All our lonely aching while we are apart.
 Hold them gently to you, and let them see our love.
 Let them see this, our valentine to them above.
 Reassure them of our love, that it is still the same
 And gently hold us when we cry, when we hear them
 Whisper our names.
 Let this exchange of love be our valentine
 And whisper to them that our love will stand the test of time.
 Show them the memories are safely held inside
 And with us they will always abide.
 Let them see this day, a day filled with our love.
 As we shed our tears, and whisper their names,
 to our Valentines above,

Sheila Simmons

From TCF, Mesa County, Colorado Chapter

I want you to live while I wait for you, asleep.

I want your ears still to hear the wind

I want you to sniff the seas aroma that we loved together,

To continue to walk on the sand we walk on

I want what I love to continue to live.

Pablo Naruda 1904-73 from Love Sonnets

Submitted by Norval Lyon

My Sister

I am not sure where to start. My older sister, Lezlie, died on October 1, 1997. It has been a little more than four months and I still catch my breath and start to tear up when someone mentions her name. I am a private griever, I guess. When I heard the news that she was in the ER, I fell to my knees and prayed to God. I told Him I was going to put this in His hands and that it was up to Him now – as if it was not earlier. “She did not make it.” These are the words that I heard my father say through a cloud of tears and pain. While holding my mother, he explained that she was gone. My immediate reaction was to cry. I really did not know what this would mean. I am slowly finding out just what it does.

What do we do now? I wanted to take immediate action, calling relatives, the minister, and helping in a time when my parents needed someone to lean on. I was bound and determined to be the strong one for a while. And I was.

As we made funeral arrangements and memorials plans, I, like the rest of them, sat in silence as the tears and pain flowed from my eyes. It hurt. But I was determined to remain strong for my children and for my family who seemed to be crumbling right before my very eyes. A very difficult thing to do for a little girl who thinks her daddy is the strongest person she has ever known.

I dreaded the viewing at the funeral home. I did not want to go to the funeral home and see her like that, not even one last time. My parents insisted it would be a good thing for all of us. As the time approached, I was more and more frustrated at the prospect of falling apart upon seeing her. However, as we entered the funeral home and went into the room where her body lay at rest, something happened. I could not shed a tear. It was as if my brain and body (and soul, for that matter) went on autopilot. I sat quietly on the first row watching my father fall to his knees and sob. My mother could not speak. My baby sister holding on to them both, in tears. I was on the outside looking in on the strangest and yet saddest heartbreaking moment of my life. But that’s just it: I was on the outside looking in. I was

the strong one, but not by choice. I did not consciously decide to lock out my feelings and, yet, the entire episode was painful. I can’t explain my reaction.

I went through the memorial service with minimal tears. I greeted those wishing to personally offer condolences because I know my family was struggling with having to look them in the eyes and share their pain along with their own. But then I saw my friend, Julie. Julie has survived through the same experience I am going through. The key word is survived. As I hugged her, my strength lapsed and I started to cry, sort of uncontrollably. This was good.

Julie told me that “things are never going to get better.” I thought to myself, what a terrible thing to say to someone in my circumstance, but she was right. Her honesty now is appreciated. She was right. Things will never get better, we just learn to handle and cope. I am grateful for her kindness and friendship. We belong to a club that I hope no one will ever have to join. We have lost a piece of ourselves and our family will never be the same. This is a permanent state.

I still cry. I am able to get through a conversation using her name without crying – well, at least sometimes. But there are times; I call them “moments of truth,” that I am starting to experience. The first occurred on December 1, 1997. I was sitting having lunch with my coworkers. We were not talking about anything related to my loss but all of a sudden, I blurted out, “Oh, my God, it’s been two months since my sister died.” I had to get up and run. It’s odd I seem to have this need to get up and bolt frequently. I mostly control it and move on to something else, but the urge is still present and strong.

There are songs, music, books, and a little newsletter published by The Compassionate Friends that will bring me to uncontrolled grieving. I sit and hold my children as I totally let go of all the pent-up pain and sadness. It’s funny, I have remained strong for them and in my weakest moments they are all I hold on to.

Anyway, these “moments of truth” come frequently.

The closest analogy I can think of to explain this whole experience is that I am like a

child whose nose is pressed up against the window pane of life when all of a sudden, the window shatters. I am so busy trying to pick up the pieces to protect the others and insure that no one else gets hurt that I do not realize until much later that my arms and hands are bleeding heavily. I can finally see the devastation and now feel the pain.

Kim Bernal

In Memory of my sister, Lezlie Dyane Davis
TCF Sugar Land-Southwest Houston, TX

Grief and Marriage

When our son was killed, I remember thinking through the haze of pain that this most horrifying of life experiences would somehow bring us closer. Sharing the loss of a child created and loved by both of us for twenty years would surely deepen the bond between us. I was in for a surprise.

We clung almost blindly to each other until the shock began to give way to ugly reality. As we each moved to our individual pattern of grieving, differences began to emerge. I felt like a time bomb about to explode. I needed desperately to talk about our son. My husband refused to verbalize his feelings and became angry at my overtures. I stopped trying to communicate.

This was beyond my comprehension. Where was my helpmate, my best friend? I felt rejected, unloved and terribly alone. Anger overwhelmed me as I bitterly realized that I wasn't going to be able to share my grieving with the person who meant the most to me in the world. I knew that many marriages fail after the death of a child. Dear God, how could we possibly survive an additional tragedy?

We attended a few Compassionate Friends meetings, and then I continued alone. The gentle acceptance of others who had lost children permitted me to talk or cry without guilt. Our problem was definitely not unique; many other parents expressed similar frustrations. So many couples experience marital difficulties after the death of a child that it is now considered the norm. We weren't going crazy; and just because our grieving styles were different didn't mean that our whole marriage would fall apart. My anger began to dissipate as I slowly faced the fact that I had been placing unrealistic expectations on my husband.

Hurting at least as much as I, he simply could not meet my needs for support.

Much later, the knowledge that support had been there all along from my friends—if I had only asked for it—saddened me. I had to admit that I simply had been too proud to reveal myself as a suffering person in need of help. I will be forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for being there with loving, open arms.

We began to have some honest discussions, agreeing that we needed each other's nurturing in order to survive and find meaning in life. We learned to respect each other's feelings. We tried to please each other in little ways: a hug, a special meal, anything that expressed caring. Patience with each other smoothed over many rough moments. Time spent alone together was very healing. It took a conscious decision from both of us to try harder. Some days, we didn't have any energy left when grief was particularly painful. It wasn't always easy as we couldn't talk about our son for a long time.

As I look back, I see that ignorance of grief and the impact it can have on a marriage was the basis for our problems. But in retrospect, how could we possibly have been prepared for the onslaught of paralyzing emotions that overwhelmed us? Anguish of this intensity can reveal a spouse you've never seen before. Deeply wounded, both of you will be inevitably changed from the experience of losing a child. Back then, understanding these simple facts would have immeasurably helped us.

Pat Retzloff
TCF Oshkosh, WI

Remember

Light a quiet candle
Send a quiet kiss
Say a quiet fare-thee-well
To the one you miss.
Light a quiet candle
Shed a quiet tear
Sing a quiet lullaby . . .
And the quiet
Christmas Star will hear.

Sascha Wagner
TCF Des Moines

COPING

January is a reflective month. Ice ponds reflect the leaden sky, and the heart reflects the emptiness of a frozen spirit. When will we begin to thaw? When will we feel like we're making some progress in this place of icicles and cold sheets' sunless days and long, empty nights? Will we ever be happy again? Will I ever be ME again? January is also the month for making promises, commitments, and resolutions (resolutions are FANCY promises). We begin our new year with high hopes, strong wills, and long lists of things that will be different this year. To celebrate my commitment to a **new me**, I bought a jogging suit, expensive shoes, timer, pulse meter, and M&M dispenser (you've got to have some motivation). **THIS YEAR WILL BE DIFFERENT!**

We also spend some time looking back over the road we've traveled, and sometimes we wonder if we have made any progress at all. In the beginning, we misplace car keys, checkbooks, toothbrushes, relatives, and important stuff like the TV Guide. We had to begin making lists of everything. We simply couldn't remember anything. I couldn't remember my address, social security number, zip code, or my mother-in-law's birthday. (I never could remember that.) I even started making lists of my lists! I knew I was going to be all right when I first discovered I could remember that I had made a list.

You know you're making progress when you can coordinate an entire outfit again. Shoes, belts, ties, purses, even sweaters and jackets often got left, simply because when we were hurting so terribly, we couldn't think about what to wear. Many of us didn't even know that panty hose were on backwards, or the tie was crooked. If you are wearing matched shoes right now, then you are making progress.

You are making progress when you no longer choke when you say your loved one's name. When you can walk down the cereal aisle in the supermarket and not dissolve into tears, progress is being made. When you can enjoy baking HIS favorite cookies or pie or cake again, you are on your way. When the photographs come back out once more and you can wander through the scrapbooks again, letting the smiles peek through the tears, then hope is returning. When memories, for the most part, bring comfort and warmth instead of emptiness and pain, *January grows shorter.*

When you begin to understand that putting away your loved one's things does NOT mean putting him out of your life, then your step becomes lighter.

Progress occurs when you completely understand that your loved one DIED, but the love you share between you can never be destroyed. Hope begins to return when you can hear laughter again—and some of that laughter is your own. Recovery is possible once unrealistic hopes for a lost future are given up, grieved for, and moved beyond. Perhaps it is not so much saying good-bye to our loved one as it is saying farewell to the old us and the life we shared. Making progress through grief doesn't mean that you no longer miss your loved one. He is part of your life forever, but his role in your life changes. Our lifestyle and habits change to reflect a different family landscape.

Now as you look back, it is amazing to see the life fabric—no longer ripped apart with a gaping hole, but mended with tiny stitches, left perhaps a bit lumpy (like lots of us), but patched with time, effort and love. Old threads and new threads have blended together and have been re-woven into a pattern not quite the same as we had originally planned. It is a tapestry of love, given and received, remembered and shared. Life can become good and whole and complete once again, not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no longer within hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive. The renewed energy and love we feel as winter turns into spring becomes the memorial to our loved one...not the grave markers we decorate, not the books we write, not the speeches we give, but the LOVE we share and pass on.

You know you are making progress when all of this begins to make some sense (save this column to read later!). When the shoes match and the car keys are found and the list of lists grows shorter, then you are making progress. Then the laughter can return, and with that magical sound comes the healing of the hurt and the shedding of the Band-Aid, because the heart is learning to sing again.

January...the month to check on our progress, to make new commitments—and to start jogging.

Darcie Sims
TCF Enid, OK

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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

① OTHER LOCAL RESOURCES

MADD 858-564-0780
Empty Cradle 619-595-3887

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)

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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
March / April 2018

Issue of
The Compassionate Friend is

February 15, 2018

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

January / February 2018

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.