



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.*



**March / April  
2019**

**Issue 142**

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**Next Meeting**

**Wednesday  
March 6th**

**Wednesday  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

***These pages Dedicated with Love to:***



Kristin Cynthia Lee Kessler



Dee Louise Hochstetler

**♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥**



Christopher L Mariano



Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo

San Diego Chapter of TCF  
11582 Fury Lane #118  
El Cajon, CA 92019  
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[www.sdtcf.org](http://www.sdtcf.org)

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Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696  
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Web Site: [www.compassionatefriends.org/](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/)

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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.**

- ♥ **Gordon R. Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia.**
- ♥ **Diane & Gary Hochstetler — In Loving Memory of their daughter Dee Louise.**
- ♥ **Tula Kareotes — In Loving Memory of her son Christopher. "Love & Miss You .... You are my 'Angel'".**
- ♥ **Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro.**

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February 6, 2019

To Dee ..... our precious daughter on your 46<sup>th</sup> birthday in Heaven.

This picture of you (cover) at "Y" camp in Prescott, Az. Summer 1994, epitomizes your laughter and spunk as you were camp counselor to a group of middle school kids.

Unlike your mom, you weren't afraid to get in & get dusty dirty with your kids hikes, campfires, showers in the outdoors, sleeping in rustic cabins and outdoors toilets. You loved it and the kids and staff loved you. Many came to your memorial service. You adapted to different and sometimes difficult situations like a real champ. You always made the best of wherever you were planted and did it with grace and a beautiful smile and sometimes your infectious laugh. How we miss All of that about you and MORE! This world is a sadder place in your absence.

In spite of an incredible void in our lives, Dad and I keep on helping and giving to those Moms and Dads who also have lost precious children. What we do, we do in your beautiful memory.

We love and miss you beyond words  
Mom and Dad - Gary and Diane Hochstetler

## **The Compassionate Friends**

### **Mission Statement**

"When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family".



### **Telephone Friends**

Ever feeling blue and need someone to talk to, who understands and cares. Just pick up the phone and call:

LONG TERM     Lynn Lyon  
ILLNESS        (760) 639-4601

ONLY CHILD    Wendy Jones  
                      (619) 371-2335

ALCOHOL       Elizabeth  
RELATED       Richardson  
                      (619) 280-1832

PARA             David Bolaños  
HABLAR EN     Keyser  
ESPAÑOL        (760) 310-3632

### **Meeting Place and Times** THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SAN DIEGO MEETS ON

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 7 P.M. at:  
**Community of Christ Church**  
4811 Mount Etna Dr. 92117  
In the Clairemont area of San Diego

**Take I-805 to Balboa Ave. west. Turn right (north) on Genesee Ave. one block, Left turn (west) on Mount Etna Dr.; One half mile or so.(Church is on left side.)**

**Genesee Ave. runs north and south about one mile west of I-805 and can be accessed from Balboa Ave.; Clairemont Dr.; or Hwy 52.**

### OF NOTE

**The Compassionate Friends is not a religious organization. All bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents are welcome to TCF no matter your personal religious beliefs.**

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### About Our Newsletter

**Cost of printing and mailing our newsletters is expensive. Thanks to all of you who send in a Love Gift whenever you can, we are able to keep our monthly newsletters going. It encourages us when we hear from you.**

**We hope to hear from each of our readers sometime during the year. Your gift does not need to be a great amount to make a difference. It all helps...and it offers each of us the opportunity to remember your child, too, in a special way when we see his or her name. Each child touches our hearts, and in various ways, bonds us together.**

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### To Place Child's Picture In Newsletter

**If you wish to have your child's picture in our newsletter please use the Application / Love Gifts form on the back page. Recommended for Love Gifts is \$30. Donations / Love Gifts are always greatly appreciated.**



***Our Children – Loved, Missed and Remembered  
March & April***  
**We remember the families of:**



**Birthdays**

*Emil Ian de la Barrera, born 3-1*  
*Alexis Morgan Dale, born 3--5*  
*Nicholas James Reynolds, born 3-9*  
*Cynthia Lee Kessler, born 3-10*  
*Damian "Damo" Reid Carver, born 3-11*  
*Jason Lee Hansen, born 3-13*  
*Michael Lopez, born 3-14*  
*Amy Sara Bowden, born 3-16*  
*Dee Louse Hochstetler, born 3-21*  
*Joseph Roy Elkins, born 3-24*  
*Hugo Payne, born 3-31*  
*Alan H. Balsam, born 4-2*  
*Alexander Joseph Niazi, born 4-8*  
*Mary Ann Valdez, born 4-8*  
*David Michael Ellis, born 4-11*  
*Matthew Beaver, born 4-13*  
*Lisa Stoefen, born 4-14*  
*Lisa Marie Stoefen, born 4-14*  
*David John Merritt, born 4-15*  
*Matthew Raimer, born 4-15*  
*Angela Scarbrough, born 4- 14*  
*Jana A. Warda Schott, born 4-15*  
*Spencer Keni Watts, born 4-19*  
*Christopher Andrew Fulston, born 4-20*  
*Christopher L Mariano, born 4-20*  
*Terest Bowers. Born 4-22*  
*Amanda Harrington, born 4-22*  
*Dominique Ynette Young, born 4-23*  
*Matthew Aiden Baxley, born 4-27*  
*Stephanie Johanna Westrich, born 4-30*

**Anniversaries**

*Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo, died 3-2*  
*Nathaniel Poteat, died 3-3*  
*Kelli R. Smith, died 3-4*  
*Cooper Jancic, died 3-9*  
*Julie Hamilton, died 3-12*  
*Ronald Paul Jones, died 3-14*  
*Jennifer Ann Greenwald, died 3-16*  
*Malini Elizabeth Sathyadev, died 3-16*  
*Leonard Valadez, died 3-17*  
*Gregg Garon, died 3-17*  
*Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson, died 3-18*  
*Trevor Shane Kirby, died 3-20*  
*Joshua Linzy Fogel, Died 3-27*  
*Dylan Libby, died 3-28*  
*Rick Nolin, died 3-30*  
*Jasmine Bellofatto, died 4-3*  
*Paul Albert Alferos Jr., died 4-4*  
*Brian James Gillis, died 4-4*  
*Mary Ann Valdez, died 4-8*  
*Josh Forness, died 4-5*  
*Christopher Andrew Fulston, died 4-8*  
*Mikael Larson, died 4-8*  
*Darryl Charles Hohman, died 4-9*  
*Michael Dylkiewicz, died 4-9*  
*Brian Michael Bennett, died 4-11*  
*Joshua Michael Jensen, died 4-11*  
*Emily Quinlan, died 4-15*  
*Kyle Goff, died 4-20*  
*Ronald Jack Drew, died 4-20*  
*Spencer Keni Watts, died 4-22*  
*Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley,  
died 4-24*  
*Brittany Star Curcio, died 4-24*  
*Francisco "Frankie" Morales, died 4-27*  
*Andrew K. Scott, died 4-28*  
*George Brers IV, died 4-28*





Pictures from our Christmas Candle Lighting Ceremony.  
See more on our website. Taken by Uma Suresh.

**42ND TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE****RINGS OUT IN  
PHILADELPHIA****JULY 19-21, 2019**

## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

### Pre-registration Rates

Adult – \$125.00

Senior (65+) – \$115.00

Active Military – \$75.00

Full-time College Students (with ID) – \$60.00

Child – \$60.00

**REGISTER NOW**

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Philadelphia 201 Hotel

201 N. 17th St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

**MAKE A RESERVATION**

Or call 215.448.2963 ext. 6415 to reserve a room and use group code TH1326. Room rate is \$145 for guest room with Queen/King or 2 Doubles.

The Compassionate Friends National Conference is a weekend spent surrounded by other bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. It is a place where hope grows and friendships are made with others who truly understand. With inspirational keynote speakers, abundant workshops for everyone's wants and needs, and a remembrance candle lighting [program](#) culminating with the annual Walk to Remember, this time of healing and hope is the [gift](#) we give ourselves. Join us as together we remember and share the everlasting love we have for our precious children, siblings and grandchildren.

The 42nd TCF National Conference will be held in Philadelphia, on July 19-21, 2019 at the Philadelphia 201 Hotel. "Hope Rings in Philadelphia" is the theme of next year's event, which promises more of this year's great National Conference experience. We'll keep you updated with details on the national website as well as on our [TCF/USA Facebook Page](#) and elsewhere as they become available. Plan to come and be a part of this heartwarming experience.

## The Anticipation of Spring

Spring is a time for growth and renewal. As a child, teen, and then an adult, I always looked forward to spring with anticipation. The thoughts of green grass, budding trees, and blooming flowers of all varieties and colors were a welcome change from the long cold, dreary Michigan winter.

It was a magical time of year. When I was a child, each member of my family watched anxiously to lay claim to being the first to spot the familiar hop-hop of the returning robin, the first sign that spring was actually here. We could finally take off the gloves, shed our heavy winter coats and boots, and roll down the windows on the car to hear the laughter of children playing outside and smell the fresh mown grass as we'd drive down the road.

That's the way it was for me on the first day of spring 12 years ago. I remarked how beautiful the tulips looked as they danced in the wind. The trees were budding, and there was magic in the air. My kids and I shed our heavy winter coats, flinging them in the backseat, rolled down the windows of the car, and started singing in celebration of the beautiful day we were experiencing.

And then . . . *IT* happened.

Suddenly, undeniably, horrifically—my world, my spring, my life changed.

My 5-year-old son, Stephen, died that first spring day. His 8-year-old sister, Stephanie, my firstborn, died a few hours later, enough past midnight to list the next day on the death certificate. Gone was the laughter, the magic, the beauty of my world.

The springs that followed were no longer filled with anticipation or magic. They were dark and ugly and filled with memories too painful to talk about. I wanted nothing to do with "spring." If H.G. Wells's time machine had existed, I would have entered it at the end of winter and fast-forwarded through spring.

As time marched on and one spring followed another, I learned an important lesson in my journey through grief: As much as I wanted to, I couldn't fast-forward through the hard spots. I couldn't go around them. I had to go through them slowly, like a dog paddling through water, so I could get to the other side. Somehow doing this taught me to cope, to endure, to face tomorrow and all the first days of spring that followed. It's much like the transformation that takes place when a butterfly emerges from a dark, cold, seemingly lifeless chrysalis.

A few years ago, as winter was drawing to a close and the first day of spring was quickly approaching, I looked out the kitchen window toward the budding pear tree in the backyard and discovered it was full of chirping robins. I smiled and knew that spring somehow wasn't going to be so bad. It was once again time to enjoy the smells of the season, the beauty of the budding trees, and the magic that the season had to offer. And I knew Stef and Steve would have wanted that for me.

Pat Loder

TCF Lakes Area Chapter, MI  
In Memory of Stephanie and Stephen Loder

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## Angels Among Us

Our Angels are among us  
We see them everyday  
In all the forms that God created...  
They are with us along life's way.

We see them in the sunrise,  
That brightens and warms our soul.  
We feel them in the summer breeze  
That chases away our cold.

They are there among the flowers...  
Their sweet scent a memory of love.  
They soar with the eagles,  
As they fly so high above.

The night will find them in the stars,  
Lighting our path below.  
And even in our dreams,  
Their presence we'll still know.

As the snow melts with the sun,  
And spring flowers peek through their beds,  
They come on the wings of butterflies,  
And flutter about our heads.

They are telling us they are with us,  
And will be forever more...  
Until it's time for us to meet again,  
As we pass through heaven's door.

Jacquelyn M. Comeaux

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## My New Address Book

One of my support pillars in this grief journey is Dennis Apple, author of *Life After the Death of My Son*. In a webinar hosted by the National Office of The Compassionate Friends, Dennis mentioned that once you become a bereaved parent, your address book changes. I may have heard that phrase previously, but with the holidays coming, it really jolted me.

I was once one of “those people” who dutifully mailed out annual personalized Christmas cards, complete with a holiday photo of our family and the oft-dreaded “Christmas letter.” Since our son died, I can’t yet see myself even sending out a generic holiday card to anyone ever again.

It’s obvious that the number of cards in our mailbox has dwindled. Perhaps that was inevitable. For one thing, we’re not sending them out ourselves. Many folks expect a card exchange to be reciprocal. I get that.

Also, situations change. Once, our lives were concentrated on our children and their activities, bringing us into constant contact with our community. There were parent/teacher conferences, Back to School nights, PTA meetings, sporting events, concerts, plays, class parties, carpooling obligations, etc. Without those activities, some of our relationships would have faded away even if Jordan hadn’t died.

It is impossible for me to know which relationships might have endured. It is difficult to calibrate what would have happened anyway and what has happened because we’ve become bereaved parents.

There may be some who avoid contact with us because they can’t bear to face our reality. It’s too painful and perhaps too scary. If it could happen to us, could it happen to them? Is it contagious? There are also those who may find that our sadness somehow diminishes their happiness. For those who may avoid us for such reasons, I have to say that’s pretty pathetic.

For most, I think it might just be a case of not knowing what to say or do. They might be afraid of saying or doing something to hurt us further. For those people, I have a few suggestions during the holiday season.

- Please do send us a card even if we don’t send you one. It might be best if you don’t send the card you’re sending to everyone else. A cheery card is not appropriate. The

Merry is gone from my Christmas. There are plenty of “gentle” holiday cards expressing “thinking of you.”

For me, I’d appreciate a note that says something like, “I can’t imagine how much you miss Jordan at this time of year.” I’d even like it if you include a memory of Jordan from past Christmases. I may cry when I read it, but I cry anyway.

- Invite us to your holiday celebrations, even if we don’t feel up to it. I like to know you realize I haven’t fallen off the planet. Please don’t be offended if participating in a “party” is beyond us. If we do attend, please understand if we don’t stay long. (I cannot speak for all bereaved parents; surely there are some who welcome social opportunities.)
- If we do accept an invitation, make people who might not know us aware of what our circumstances are now. It is very, very hard to deal with the “So, how many children do you have?” question from a stranger in a social setting. Protect us from that if you can.

If your schedule allows, call and ask us to meet for a cup of coffee, or lunch, or a movie. Offer to stop by for a short visit. Accompany us on a walk. It is impossible to express how grateful I am for any moments of diversion, especially during this season when I’m trying to avoid decorations, Christmas music, toy commercials, etc. decorations, Christmas music, toy commercials, etc.

My “revised” address book has two other categories. One, of course, is the new friends I’ve met who are also bereaved parents. I know for sure I would die of a broken heart without them.

But another category is the people who I barely knew who are *not* bereaved parents but who call me, email me, spend time with me. People who just have such heart that they want to reach out to provide whatever comfort they can. However superficial our previous contact may have been, it’s now deep and indispensable. Some of these are “old friends” from years ago, some of these are more casual acquaintances from my more recent but pre-tragedy life. I’m grateful for them all. They are a gift in my address book.

Peggi Johnson  
TCF Arlington, VA  
In Memory of my son, Jordan



## My First National Conference

It was a hot, sultry day as we pulled out of the driveway that July afternoon back in 1993. I had wanted an earlier start, but my apprehension slowed me down. I had managed to come up with excuse after excuse to keep from leaving—knowing that getting in the car and heading toward Chicago meant an admission that I truly was one of the many who had experienced the unthinkable.

More delays—more excuses—more time wasted. I walked down the concrete driveway to the mailbox, not expecting to find much. But there it was, a letter from Dana, a fellow bereaved traveler with whom I was exchanging letters.

“See you soon,” she had written. “Can’t wait to meet you in person and give you a hug!”

That letter gave me the courage I needed. It convinced me that attending an annual conference of The Compassionate Friends—the organization’s 16<sup>th</sup>—really was the right thing to do. So my husband, Wayne, and I settled in the car and started on what was to be a most memorable journey.

There was a lot of silence as we drove the miles. I know Wayne and I were both thinking the same thing. What in the world were we doing?? And why in the world would we want to head to a conference where all the people had experienced the death of a child? Shouldn’t we be going to someplace happy, someplace where we could try to forget, at least momentarily, the pain. I certainly didn’t want to go to a big pity party where everyone sat around reminding me what I had lost. I lived that everyday. I knew that other people from my chapter would be there, but somehow attending a national conference of The Compassionate Friends seemed like a huge leap from our monthly meetings, and I just wasn’t sure I was ready.

The drive seemed to take less time than I expected—or perhaps than I wanted it to. Finally we arrived at the downtown Chicago hotel that was to be our home for the next several days. I felt awkward and strange. But then an enormous sense of relief surfaced when I spotted Dana’s name on her badge. We hugged and cried and hugged some more.

The next morning was the opening ceremony. Upon walking into the ballroom where it was held, my breath was taken away by the sight of rows upon rows of chairs and a giant rainbow of hearts on a 40-foot high canvas. I learned that the Wisconsin TCF chapters had spent many days constructing that special rainbow from more than 5,000 hearts...hearts, which came from bereaved TCF family members around the country.

The sharing, the workshops, the compassion, and the concern were unmatched by anything I had ever experienced. It was a time for new friends, old memories, and healing tears. Never in my life had I felt more love, caring, and concern from people whom I had never met before. We shared a special synergy—something that comes along only once in a lifetime. It was as though I was wrapped in a warm, wonderful cocoon.

The kindness and compassion shown me that weekend gave me hope that I could have a good life again. I spent every free moment talking with my new friends, sharing, and—yes—laughing. The warmth I experienced convinced me I had made the right decision to come. I didn’t want that conference to ever end.

When I’m asked if bereaved families should really muster up the energy, the courage, the fortitude to attend a national conference, I answer without hesitation, “yes!” Giving the conference a chance to work the magic of healing helped me beyond measure. It truly is a place where you realize that TCF’s motto is true: “We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends!”

Pat Loder  
(Former) Executive Director

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### ♥♥ TCF Memory Garden ♥♥

A few spaces are still available at our TCF Memory Garden located at the El Camino Cemetery. For information or questions about our Garden contact Lisa Hohman 619-287-4253.

Our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Long Kha, Allen's Dad In taking over the office of Treasurer of TCF San Diego local chapter.

Deep gratitude and appreciation to Murray Westrich, Stephanie's Dad for many years of dedicated service as our SDTCF treasurer.

### Birthday Table

Noticeable at Wednesday's meeting is a birthday table. We invite members, if they wish, to bring memory items, pictures, birthday cake, or share a favorite food during your child's birthday month. It's an opportunity to visit and share thoughts with the other members.

If you would like a Picture Button of your precious child see Lisa Hohman. The buttons are about 3 inches in diameter. Limit one per person  
Provide picture

### Like the Butterfly

It fluttered above my head  
Weightless in the soft breeze.  
I reached up my hand  
It lit on my finger.

Waving glistening wings gently,  
It looked at me for timeless moments.  
I smiled, reaching deep and  
Finding all those cherished memories.

As it flitted off through the sunlit morn,  
I knew we had said hello once more.

Leslie Langford  
TCF, North Platte, NE

## THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS SAN DIEGO CHAPTER STEERING COMMITTEE

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### ① OUR LOCAL WEB SITE

Visit the San Diego Chapter homepage:

[www.sdtcf.org](http://www.sdtcf.org)

Email: [leaders@sdtcf.org](mailto: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](mailto:info@SOSLsd.org)

**Bereaved Parents of the USA**  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

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

**Alive Alone - for now childless parents**  
[www.alivealone.org](http://www.alivealone.org)

### ① INFORMATION ON THE NET

Visit the TCF national homepage:  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://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](mailto:caricat83@hotmail.com)

Elene Bratton

[jemiesjoy@simplynet.com](mailto:jemiesjoy@simplynet.com)

[www.jemiesjoy.org](http://www.jemiesjoy.org)

Tami Carter [haley1@san.rr.com](mailto: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  
**May / June 2019**

Issue of The Compassionate  
Friend is

**April 15, 2019**

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

March / April 2019

### 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.