

# The Compassionate Friends

for families who are grieving the death of a child.



January / **February** 2021

**Issue 153** 

Dedication and 1-2 **Love Gifts** 

**Mission Statement Meeting Location Telephone Friends** 

Loved, Missed and 4 Remembered

**Articles** 5-10

Websites **Steering Committee 11** 

> Location, see p. 3

### **Next Meeting**

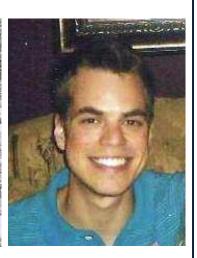
Virtual Meetings Wednesday Jan 6th

Wednesday Feb 3rd Uncertain **Check Website** 

# These pages Dedicated with Love to:





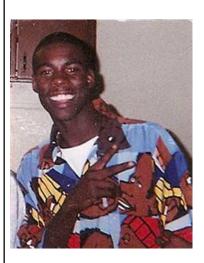


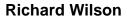
Jennifer Ann Donnell

**Rosa Griffith** 

Daniel R. Keyser

# Always In Our Hearts







**Brian Mark Allen** 



**Todd Almeida Cutler** 

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**Chapter Co-Leaders** Lisa Hohman 619-287-4253 Sandi Terrell 619-562-3949

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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.

- ♥ Donna Wallace In Loving Memory of her Daughter Jennifer Ann.
- ♥ Marc & Barbara Allen In Loving Memory of their son Brian.
- ♥ David & Ruth Keyser In Loving Memory of their son Daniel.
- **♥** Rosa Garrett In Loving Memory of her daughter Rosa.
- **♥** Carol Temes In Loving Memory of her son Corey Allen.
- ♥ Marchell Crain In Loving Memory of her son Richard.
- ♥ Richard & Gloria Selby In Loving Memory of their son Todd. Missing your smile, laughter and you in our hearts forever. Mom & Richard

Our Candle Lighting Service December 13, 2020



A beautiful virtual meeting with 47 friends and family attending. An occasional glitch yet still an enjoyable event. Remembering our children gone too soon, but never forgotten.



# 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 ILLNESS

Lynn Lyon (760) 639-4601

ONLY CHILD Wendy Jones

Wendy Jones (619) 371-2335

ALCOHOL RELATED Elizabeth Richardson

(619) 280-1832

PARA HABLAR EN ESPAÑOL David Bola**ñ**os Keyser

(760) 310-3632

# Sorry, Virtual Meetings for Jan Feb

Meeting Place and Times
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
OF SAN DIEGO MEETS ON
The first Wednesday of the month at:

### **Nobel Recreation Center**

8810 Judicial Drive San Diego, CA 92122

Taking I 805 north exit Nobel Drive heading west, stay in right lane for right turn to Judicial Drive; move to left lane making left turn at first Traffic Signal. Follow parking lot down to the end (2<sup>nd</sup> Bldg.) There'll be a few stair steps a few paces more, entrance to right. Walkway near. Ample parking. Nobel Drive runs east – west about one mile north of hwy. 52.

Latest on Meeting Updates: www.sdtcf.org

# **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.

# **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.

# 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.

Deadline for submission to the March / April Issue is February 15.



# 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 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 Vince Lopez, born 1-31 Cari Tate, born 2-3 Frank Palmer. born 2-5 Mitchell Szegi, born 2-6 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 Louise Hochstetler, died 1-1 Matthew Raimer, died 1-1 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 Brian Marc Allen, died 1-24 Jason Wilshe, died 1-25 Sara Elizabeth Chandler, died 1-25 Jamie Christopher Yates, died 1-26 Aymee Sofia Garcia, died 1-27 Lucas Daniel Giaconelli, died 1-29 Brittany Grell, died 2-3 Philip Glynn Murphy, died 2-7 Milton (Danny) Smith, died 2-10 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



ENJOYING THE HOLIDAYS IN A DIFFERENT WAY ... WITHOUT MY BROTHER

Posted on December 15th, 2020

I was shocked and stunned when I received the news that my brother Scott had died in a car accident. I thought my brother was going to be in my life forever. We grew up together, experienced a shared history, and knew things about each other that no one else will ever know. I always assumed we'd raise kids together, grow old together, and share many more holidays together.

So how did I not only survive the holidays, but eventually learn how to enjoy them again without my brother. It was a rocky, painful journey, with pain that hit like waves, sometimes when I least expected it. The holidays brought back so many memories; every song, smell, and tradition was bittersweet.

Initially, joy made me feel guilty. I worried that if I let go of the pain, I would be letting go of my brother's memory. It felt disloyal to experience positive feelings when I missed my brother so much. Well-meaning friends told me that my brother would want me to have a happy holiday, and while I knew this on an intellectual level, my heart wasn't ready to accept it yet.

There were some relatives who tried to recreate a typical Christmas, with family traditions, as if my brother had never died. Not acknowledging my brother was the worst thing anyone could do. The pretense was that everything needed to return back to normal.

However, things in my life were forever changed and I needed to figure out how to create a "new holiday normal." For me, this meant finding a way to honor the memory of my brother while at the same time reinvesting in my new life.

Here are some of the things that have helped me during the holidays. I hope they will help you as well. However, everybody who is grieving must decide what works best for them:

# Holiday Survival Tips:

- Plan in advance how you are going to spend the holidays, and be able to say no if you need to.
- Take a break from holiday traditions that are too painful –create new traditions.
- Connect with others.
- Share stories of past holidays and spend time reflecting back. Keep your loved one's memory alive for those who were too young to remember the person.
- Include memories of your loved one in your celebration (e.g., light a candle, display pictures, make a toast in honor of the person).

My brother played many roles during the holidays. I can fill some of these roles but there are many more that will never be filled, and I fill those with all the memories that he left behind. Although we are poorer for having lost our loved ones, we are richer for having known them. I hope you will be able to celebrate the happiness, laughter, and memories that your brother brought into your life by enjoying this holiday in a new and different way!

# <u>HEIDI HORSLEY</u>

Dr. Heidi Horsley is a grief expert and the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Open to Hope, an international organization committed to providing hope.



# WHEN GRIEF UPENDS YOUR HOLIDAYS

Posted on December 8th, 2020

Everyone has favorite memories of holidays past: Uncle Larry's "toast of gratitude," Grandpa carving the turkey, little Anna's rendition of "Silent Night." These moments sparkle in our memory banks and make us look forward to the next November or December, hopeful that we'll get to bask in the same hilarity or sweetness again.

But what happens when they become memories interrupted? When you've lost a child, it can feel as if you've lost the most beautiful moments of the holidays. If your most cherished memory of Thanksgiving was listening to your child explain the story of the Pilgrims' encounter with the Native Americans or your favorite Christmas moment was watching your child's delight at what Santa brought, the holidays can be fraught with emotion.

Your strongest instinct may be to cancel the holidays altogether and hide out. Eating frosting out of a can and crying over Hallmark movies sounds preferable to holding it together in front of family members you haven't seen since last Thanksgiving. But you deserve to enjoy the holidays and seek happiness where you can find it, and there are a few ways to do that.

Start a new holiday tradition. If your biggest impulse is to throw in the towel, do so — by not doing what you've always done before. Rather than sit at the same table with the same food and stare at the empty seat that fills your every thought, change the dynamic. Push your family to serve Thanksgiving dinner at a soup kitchen. Start a new tradition of "adopting" a family in need for Christmas and buying the gifts on their wish list. Ask everyone to throw new dishes into the Hanukkah mix. If you're used to celebrating Kwanzaa at home, add in ice skating or driving around to looking at lights. Mix up your usual plans so everything feels new, not just your grief.

Scale back your expectations. Are you used to making a huge spread of 14 different dishes, including a turkey and a ham? Recognize that that just might not be in your wheelhouse this year — and accept that that can be a good thing. Assign some dishes to other family members to contribute. Call a caterer to prepare what sounds

overwhelming. Switch to easier sides that may include a boxed mix or a microwave. There's no shame in simplifying things so you can enjoy yourself, and there's no reason others can't help you carry the load.

Focus on your favorite parts. Is the best part of Christmas planning the playlist for the family? Are you looking forward to stuffing yourself with all the Stove Top you can get your hands on? Do you love unearthing old family videos to watch, especially ones that feature your beloved child? Give yourself permission to notice only the things that bring you joy and ignore the rest. If Aunt Jackie and Uncle Hal are fighting for the 25<sup>th</sup> year in a row, go to another room. If the noise of the toddlers is too much for you, feel free to read in bed. You're allowed to skip the hard parts in what's already a hard holiday season. Do some things on your own. If the holidays represent one of your only times to gain support from your extended family, take advantage. But if you really just want to leave the house and be by yourself for a while, ask family members to take care of your other children or help make meals while you catch a movie or go on a walk. Family members who care about you won't begrudge you the opportunity to seek solace elsewhere when you can.

Honor your child. Some families choose to light a candle in memory of a child; others tell stories of funny or sweet things the child did. You may want to

buy a memorial ornament to hang on the tree, make a special trip to visit him or her in the cemetery, or simply make a meal loaded with his or her favorite dishes. Ignoring the hole in your heart — and your family — won't make the holidays easier, but acknowledging what's missing may give you a moment of warmth that makes the rest less taxing.

The holidays are overwhelming for many people: Travel, family dynamics, and packed schedules can all take their toll. But add in the weight of grief, and the holidays can feel unbearable. Rather than throw in the towel and avoid the celebrations altogether, let yourself do what you need to so you can both participate and cope. The holidays may be different, but they can still be beautiful.

# **GLORIA HORSLEY**

Dr. Gloria Horsley is an internationally known grief expert, psychotherapist, and bereaved parent. She started "Open to Hope" to help the millions in the world with grief.

Author's

Website: <a href="http://www.opentohope.com">http://www.opentohope.com</a>

Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape.

~ from A Grief Observed by C. S.

Lewis

From "We Need Not Walk alone"

# The Wisdom of Darcie Sims

# A New Year ... A New Me

A new year. Another new beginning. Another chance; a new start; a new look. A new me?

I've always wondered why the new year begins buried in snow, frozen in ice or blanketed in mud. It always seems harder to begin (again) when my feet are encased in leaden boots or stuck in frozen mud. Wouldn't it be easier to begin a new journey (again) if the weather were warmer and my feet were strapped into sandals or even bare? Wouldn't new beginnings be easier if the air around me wasn't so frigid, the ground below me not so frozen, the path before me not so slippery?

I think the new year should begin in springtime instead of during a month when all I want to do is crawl under the covers and hide. January is for hibernating, not starting something new. The start of the new year is a time of reflection, recollection and re-connection. Light reflects off the ice crystals of winter when the new year starts in January. Tears collect as we pack away the holidays, recalling happier times. And without the distractions of the holidays, we have time and opportunity to reconnect to ourselves. It's a time to review, rearrange and renew.

The beginning of the new year is a time for me to take stock, to rearrange and reorganize. I review life insurance policies, tax records, calendars, household inventories and my life. It just seems a good time to check on how I'm doing and where I'm going. Am I making progress? How am I doing? Where am I going?

I used to think that grief was a process with a definite beginning and an easily identifiable end. I know when it began. It's the ending I'm having trouble with. After more than 30 years, I'm beginning to suspect that grief really is a journey. It's got an easily identifiable beginning and really no ending at all. That doesn't mean I'm stuck or even particularly s-l-o-w in my grief. It just means I'm going; I'm moving; I'm grieving, and it appears to be a lifetime journey. So, if there is no end, how do I know I'm making progress?

You know you're making progress through grief when:

 You don't always choke when you say your loved one's name. Now, I can say my loved one's name without that "catch" in my throat (most of the time), and I can even smile as I remember something wonderful instead of always reviewing one of the horrible moments. Tears don't always
 well up in your eyes
 when you think
 of your loved one.
 I might cry once
 in awhile, but for
 the most part, my
 memories don't
 bring pain any more.
 I can remember the
 laughter, the smiles,
 and the good times
 more often than I
 can recall the tough
 times.



- The cause of death isn't the emphasis anymore. In the beginning, the cause of death was one of the first things out of my mouth. Now, as I realize I am beginning to heal, I often tell a "life story" instead of a "death story." How my loved one died is not as important as how he lived, and that's a nice thing to remember first!
- Memories, for the most part, bring comfort, not pain. At first, I couldn't even look at a picture of my loved one without a searing pain ripping through my body. Now I cherish the pictures we have and I love having them out to enjoy. I am not sure that time was the great healer. After all, the only thing that time does is pass. It's what you do with the time that makes the difference. I guess that grief work is really just that...lots and lots of work is involved in order to reorder the memories. I still have the difficult ones. I just don't recall them FIRST any more!
- You realize your plans don't include your loved one anymore. This was hard. Because we are a career military family, we move a lot. For the first several years, every new set of military quarters or houses that we lived in had an empty ring to them. I kept looking at the empty bedroom as a place that "should have been something else" (like his room). After I began to make peace with my memories and began to realize that my loved one lives within me and not in the tangible things I kept, then I could allow my life to move forward. Always carrying the love between us with me, but no longer having to assign a bedroom or choose a

### More on Darcie Sims

neighborhood because of the school district. (That one was really hard, however!)

· You realize you are someone different. Grief does change

us. I am neither a stronger nor better person than before my loved one died, but I am a different person. My patience has changed, as has my tolerance level. My perspective has changed. I have truly learned how precious life is, and I don't want to waste any of its moments. I say what I mean the first time and I never forget to tell people how much

they mean to me or that

Grief isn't a seasonal song; it's a lifetime song, but it doesn't have to be a sad song forever.

I love them. I take more chances and live more deeply and fully.

· You can forgive yourself for living, when your loved one did not. This is perhaps the most difficult task of grieving, but one I am finding is easier as the years go by. I have created list after list of things I should have done to prevent the death. I have written out countless "If only" lists. I have "shoulded" myself almost into insanity! The trouble with those lists and that way of thinking is it only serves to increase the guilt, and I cannot erase what happened yesterday in order to change my today. Sometimes that makes me angry and sometimes it makes me sad. So, I have learned that once my lists are of no more value to me, I can release them. Once they are no longer within my sight, I then must learn to relinquish them emotionally as well. That is difficult to do, but once I found I could do that, I discovered there was room for love to return. Once I could let go of the guilts, there was room for happy memories and love to come back.

 Your identity is no longer highlighted by the word bereaved. I will forever be a bereaved mom, but I am less a grieving mom than I was. I am beginning to be free of the hurt and pain of grief, and it has been replaced by a wonder and amazement that I got to share that wonderful life, even if only for a little while. How grateful I am, that our loved one lived! It wasn't long

> enough; it never could be! But I am forever filled with gratitude that we got to hold love in our arms at all! It wasn't long enough, but it was something and for that I am thankful!

Perhaps the greatest measure of my progress

in this new year and in every new year, is my ability to embrace the joy of my loved one's life, no matter how small the horizon. He lived. I loved him and I still do, and that is something to bring with me into this new year. This year, I will remember the life and the love, not just the death. You know that even though your loved one died, the love between you can never be destroyed.

Grief isn't a seasonal song; it's a lifetime song, but it doesn't have to be a sad song forever.

Happy New Year! Happy New Beginnings! If not this year, then perhaps next year, you will be able to embrace the LIFE, not just remember the death. Keep walking...the journey does get easier.

May Love Be What You Remember the Most

The late Darcie Sims wrote hundreds of articles over the years on grief and loss which have been extremely popular and shared in hundreds of TCF publications. We Need Not Walk Alone is proud to honor her by featuring selections of her work in a column titled "The Wisdom of Darcie Sims."



Valentine Message

I send this message to my child Who no longer walks this plane, A message filled with love Yet also filled with pain.

My heart continues to skip a beat When I ponder your early death As I think of times we'll never share I must stop to catch my breath.

Valentine's Day is for those who love And for those who receive love, too For a parent the perfect love in life Is the love I've given you. I'm thinking of you this day, my child, With a sadness that is unspoken As I mark another Valentine's Day With a heart that is forever broken.

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



"Wishes for Bereaved Parents For The ComingYear" by Joe Rosseau, Former National TCF President

- \* To the Newly Bereaved, we wish you patience patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even ~years ahead.
- \* To the Bereaved Siblings, We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each other's needs and the beginnings of good communication.
- \* To Those Of You Who Are Single Parents, we wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone, with your loss.
- \* To Those Of You Who Are Plagued With Guilt, we wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances and that your child knew that.
- \* To Those Of You Who Have Suffered Multiple Losses, those who have experienced the death of more than one child, we wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life again.
- \* To Those Of You Who Are Deeply Depressed, we wish you the first steps out of the "valley of the shadow."
- \* To Those Experiencing Marital Difficulties after the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.
- \* To All the Fathers, we wish you the ability to express your grief, to move beyond society's conditioning, to cry.
- \* To Those With Few or No memories Of Your Child, perhaps because you suffered through a stillbirth, a miscarriage, or infant death, we wish you the sure knowledge that your child is a person and THAT YOUR GRIEF IS REAL.
- \* To Those Of You Who Have Experienced The Death of An Only Child or All Your Children, we offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.
- \* To Those Of You Unable To Cry, we wish you healing tears.
- \* To Those Of You Who Are Tired, exhausted from grieving, we wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.
- \* To Al! Others with Special Needs that we have not mentioned, we wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.

"One learns to live with the loss, the tragedy, the waste and the gaping hole in the fabric of one's life. There is no closure, nor would I want one. I want to remember him all my life, vividly: the laughter, the smell of his sneakers under his bed, his moments of joy, his humility and his integrity."

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



# THE **COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

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# (i) 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 www.alivealone.org parents

# **(i) 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 March / April 2021

**Issue of The Compassionate** Friend is

February 15, 2021

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



# THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies San Diego County Chapter

3555 Rosecrans St. #114-569, San Diego CA 92110

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

January / February 2021

### **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:

-rom	In Mer	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:	
O.I.		Date of death:	
City:		Cause:	
•	Zip:	_ Cause:	
State:	Zip: )		