



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:

March / April 2018

Issue 136

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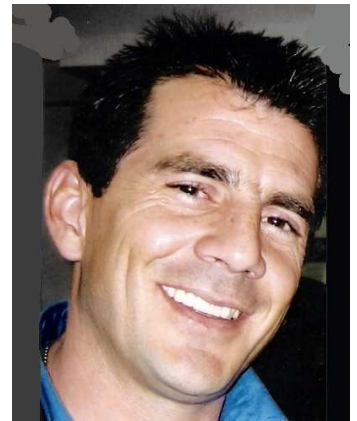
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Cynthia Lee Kessler



Dee Louise Hochstetler

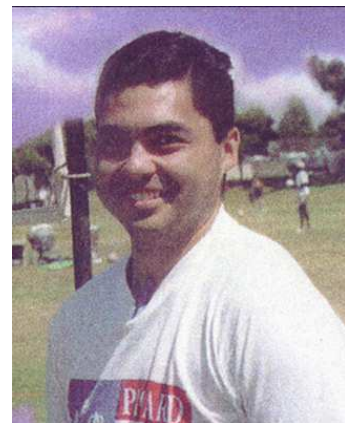


Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Vince Lopez



Darryl Charles Hohman

Next Meeting

Wednesday
March 7th

Wednesday
April 4th

San Diego Chapter of
TCF
11582 Fury Lane #118
El Cajon, CA 92019
(619) 583-1555
www.sdtcf.org

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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.

- ♥ **Gordon R. Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia.**
- ♥ **Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro. “RAMIRO, YOU ARE ALWAYS REMEMBERED AND FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS, WE MISS YOU AND WISH YOU WERE HERE.” YOUR FAMILY**
- ♥ **Diane & Gary Hochstetler — In Loving Memory of their daughter Dee Louise.**
- ♥ **Lisa & Del Hohman — In Loving Memory of their son Darryl. “Happy 46th Birthday”**
- ♥ **Barbara Lopez — In Loving Memory of her son Vince.**

You Are Braver

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

Submitted by Diane Hochstetler, Dee's Mom



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



Birthdays

Emil Ian de la Barrera, born 3-1
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 Louise 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
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
Teresa Bowers, Born 4-22
Amanda Harrington, born 4-22
Stephanie Johanna Westrich, born 4-30

Anniversaries

Ramiro Zuñiga Cedillo, died 3-2
Nathaniel Poteat, died 3-3
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, 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
son of Kathy Lee, 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-McNeely,
left his body 4-24
Brittany Star Curcio, died 4-24-05
Andrew K. Scott, died 4-28
George Brers IV, died 4-28

41ST TCF NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 27 - JULY 29



The Compassionate Friends is pleased to announce that St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the 41st TCF National Conference on July 27-29, 2018. “Gateway to Hope and Healing” is the theme of this year’s event, which promises more of this last’s great National Conference experience. The 2018 Conference will be held at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel. We’ll keep you updated with details here, 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 UNINVITED VISITOR

Posted on February 21st, 2018

Some visitors are uninvited but the worst are those that leave briefly only to return again and again, always it seems when least expected. You can't dissuade this particular uninvited visitor to stay away, though all of us try hard to do so. Personally, I have tried to be invisible hoping the visitor would not see me and would just leave. Admittedly, I have even tried to fake how I am feeling, so the visitor would not stop by. I have even gone away from home on trips just to try and avoid this visitor!

But time and time again, the uninvited visitor finds its way to me. This visitor intrudes when I have a bit of happiness. And, the visitor comes often when I least expect this visitor. You have this uninvited visitor as well. This unwelcomed, uninvited, intrusive visitor is grief.

When grief first came into my life, it crowded everything else out. When grief kept showing up again and again, I felt like I was trapped in the middle seat of an airplane on a journey I did not buy a ticket for. I felt smothered between row mates who had little if any consideration for me, leaving me feeling as if they no longer knew I even existed. As they leaned comfortably to the side or stretched into the aisle, I was left barely able to breathe.

As time waned on, I learned how to be a better traveler. I became better at integrating this uninvited visitor into my life. Some days, I almost forgot the visitor was still here. Those days came more often, now seven years after the death of my son. Sometimes though, it is as if grief deceptively lured me into a zone of letting down my guard.

It seemed when my guard is down, I suddenly found myself boarding the plane again with only a middle seat available for me to take. I have learned to use my elbows a bit on this journey. I use my elbows to combat the uninvited visitor rather than to hide, to run, or to fake how I feel.

This journey has a lot of turbulence. When I heard the news of the shooting in Florida, I grimaced knowing 17 families would be boarding the plane to begin a journey they would not want to be on. The Compassionate Friends will be there for them now and forever in the future. Together we will help all families with the uninvited visitor on this horrific grief journey.

Tony's mom, Debbie



Tony's mom, Debbie



About Butterflies



It is their time of year. If one would like to get closer, real close, you may wish to consider these two places. The first one charges admission.

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The San Diego Zoo's Safari Park opens its popular Butterfly display March and April. It's a springtime-only event that lets visitors wander among the colorful butterflies.

There are thousands of butterflies in the warm enclosure. And yes, the butterflies will land on you, especially if you're wearing bright clothes that resemble flowers.

Butterfly Jungle is opens in March and runs through April 27. San Diego Zoo's Safari Park, 15500 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido. Admission charge. Advisable to call first.

AT THE ZOO

Butterfly Jungle at the Safari Park. Butterflies deserve recognition, so the San Diego Zoo Safari Park has created an event in their honor. Butterfly Jungle, an annual springtime celebration. The Safari Park's Hidden Jungle is home to our butterflies, and inside our rain forest greenhouse, you'll see thousands of butterflies above and around you as they sip nectar from flowers and feeders.

Preparation for this event starts months in advance. We import the butterflies while they're still pupae from butterfly farms in Central and South America.

The Water conservation Garden is free but advisable to call before visiting, more activity than just butterflies.

The Water Conservation Garden

12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West
El Cajon, CA 92019

(619) 660-0614, ext. 10

info@TheGarden.org

The Garden and Gift Shop are open daily, 9 am to 4 pm (except certain holidays). The mission of The Water Conservation Garden is to inspire positive change in the living environment through the conservation of water and other natural resources. The Water Conservation Garden has nearly six acres of displays that showcase water conservation through a series of beautiful themed gardens, such as a native plant garden and a vegetable garden, as well as how-to displays such as mulch and irrigation exhibits. The Garden also features a native butterfly pavilion that is open spring and summer each year.

The Dorcas E. Utter Memorial Butterfly Pavilion is open year-round, with butterflies in the pavilion beginning in mid-to late April for approximately 6 weeks. Please check back in early April for more information on butterflies and the special events happening in the spring.

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If there are other places you have learned of, let us know.



7 THINGS I HAVE LEARNED SINCE THE LOSS OF MY CHILD

Posted on February 21st, 2018

Child loss is a loss like no other. One often misunderstood by many. If you love a bereaved parent or know someone who does, remember that even his or her “good” days are harder than you could ever imagine. Compassion and love, not advice, are needed. If you’d like an inside look into why the loss of a child is a grief that lasts a lifetime, here is what I’ve learned in my seven years of trekking through the unimaginable.

1). Love never dies.

There will never come a day, hour, minute or second I stop loving or thinking about my son. Just as parents of living children unconditionally love their children always and forever, so do bereaved parents. I want to say and hear his name just the same as non-bereaved parents do. I want to speak about my deceased children as normally and naturally as you speak of your living ones. I love my child just as much as you love yours— the only difference is mine lives in heaven and talking about about him is unfortunately quite taboo in our culture. I hope to change that. Our culture isn’t so great about hearing about children gone too soon, but that doesn’t stop me from saying my son’s name and sharing his love and light everywhere I go. Just because it might make you uncomfortable, doesn’t make him matter any less. My son’s life was cut irreversibly short, but his love lives on forever. And ever.

2). Bereaved parents share an unspeakable bond. In my seven years navigating the world as a bereaved parent, I am continually struck by the

power of the bond between bereaved parents. Strangers become kindreds in mere seconds— a look, a glance, a knowing of the heart connects us, even if we’ve never met before. No matter our circumstances, who we are, or how different we are, there is no greater bond than the connection between parents who understand the agony of enduring the death of a child. It’s a pain we suffer for a lifetime, and unfortunately only those who have walked the path of child loss understand the depth and breadth of both the pain and the love we carry.

3). I will grieve for a lifetime.

Period. The end. There is no “moving on,” or “getting over it.” There is no bow, no fix, no solution to my heartache. There is no end to the ways I will grieve and for how long I will grieve. There is no glue for my broken heart, no elixir for my pain, no going back in time. For as long as I breathe, I will grieve and ache and love my son with all my heart and soul. There will never come a time where I won’t think about who my son would be, what he would look like, and how he would be woven perfectly into the tapestry of my family. I wish people could understand that grief lasts forever because love lasts forever; that the loss of a child is not one finite event, it is a continuous loss that unfolds minute by minute over the course of a lifetime. Every missed birthday, holiday, milestone— should-be back-to-school school years and graduations; weddings that will never be; grandchildren that should have been but will never be born— an entire generation of people are irrevocably altered forever.

This is why grief lasts forever. The ripple effect lasts forever. The bleeding never stops.

4). It’s a club I can never leave, but is filled with the most shining souls I’ve ever known.

This crappy club called child loss is a club I never wanted to join, and one I can never leave, yet is filled with some of the best people I’ve ever known. And yet we all wish we could jump ship— that we could have met another way— any other way but this. Alas, these shining souls are the most beautiful, compassionate, grounded, loving, movers, shakers and healers I have ever had the honor of knowing. They are life-changers, game-changers, relentless survivors and thrivers. Warrior moms and dads who redefine the word brave. Every day loss parents move mountains in honor of

their children gone too soon. They start movements, change laws, spearhead crusades of tireless activism. Why? In the hope that even just one parent could be spared from joining the club. If you've ever wondered who some of the greatest world changers are, hang out with a few bereaved parents and watch how they live, see what they do in a day, a week, a lifetime. Watch how they alchemize their grief into a force to be reckoned with, watch how they turn tragedy into transformation, loss into legacy.

Love is the most powerful force on earth, and the love between a bereaved parent and his/her child is a lifeforce to behold. Get to know a bereaved parent. You'll be thankful you did.

5). The empty chair/room/space never becomes less empty. Empty chair, empty room, empty space in every family picture. Empty, vacant, forever gone for this lifetime. Empty spaces that should be full, everywhere we go. There is and will always be a missing space in our lives, our families, a forever-hole-in-our-hearts. Time does not make the space less empty. Neither do platitudes, clichés or well-wishes for us to "move on," or "stop dwelling," from well intentioned friends or family. Nothing does. No matter how you look at it, empty is still empty. Missing is still missing. Gone is still gone. The problem is nothing can fill it. Minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after heartbreaking year the empty space remains. The empty space of our missing child(ren) lasts a lifetime. And so we rightfully miss them forever. Help us by holding the space of that truth for us.

6). No matter how long it's been, holidays never become easier without my son. Never, ever. Have you ever wondered why every holiday season is like torture for a bereaved parent? Even if it's been 5, 10, or 25 years later? It's because they really, truly are. Imagine if you had to live every holiday without one or more of your precious children. Imagine how that might feel for you. It would be easier to lose an arm, a leg or two— anything— than to live without your flesh and blood, without the beat of your heart. Almost anything would be easier than living without one of more of your precious children. That is why holidays are always and forever hard for bereaved parents. Don't wonder

why or even try to understand. Know you don't have to understand in order to be a supportive presence. Consider supporting and loving some bereaved parents this holiday season. It will be the best gift you could ever give them.

7). Because I know deep sorrow, I also know unspeakable joy. Though I will grieve the death of my son forever and then some, it does not mean my life is lacking happiness and joy. Quite the contrary, in fact, though it took awhile to get there. It is not either/or, it's both/and. My life is more rich now. I live from a deeper place. I love deeper still. Because I grieve I also know a joy like no other. The joy I experience now is far deeper and more intense than the joy I experienced before my loss. Such is the alchemy of grief. Because I've clawed my way from the depth of unimaginable pain, suffering and sorrow, again and again— when the joy comes, however and whenever it does— it is a joy that reverberates through every pore of my skin and every bone in my body. I feel all of it, deeply: the love, the grief, the joy, the pain. I embrace and thank every morsel of it. My life now is more rich and vibrant and full, not despite my loss, but because of it. In grief there are gifts, sometimes many. These gifts don't in any way make it all "worth" it, but I am grateful beyond words for each and every gift that comes my way. I bow my head to each one and say thank you, thank you, thank you. Because there is nothing— and I mean absolutely nothing— I take for granted. Living life in this way gives me greater joy than I've ever known possible. I have my son to thank for that. Being his mom is the best gift I've ever been given. Even death can't take that away.

~ Angela Miller

I laugh, I love, I hope, I try, I
hurt, I need, I fear, I cry. And I
know you do the same things too,
So we're really not that different,
me and you.

Colin Raye

Flying a Kite

I have been a kite flyer for a long time. What joy it brought me when I was a child. I remember going up on the high, flat roof of my father's machine shop in the city of New Haven and sending my kits aloft from that rooftop. I felt excitement and wonder as I watched my kite dance among the white clouds and the blue, blue sky. Kites are fun.

Later, as I grew to adulthood, I still had fun with kites, but my kite flying became more contemplative, relaxing and therapeutic for me—a peaceful leisure time activity, much like fishing is to the fisherman.

Kites are such curious toys. Often they are flown as symbols of great events or flown as flags of our emotions—and rightly so—because we put so much of ourselves into the flying of our kites.

In Japan, a kite is flown from the house in which there is a newborn, and the child's name is on the kite, flying over the household and announcing the happy birth. In Bermuda, school children fly kites on Good Friday, not only for fun, but as a tradition to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. The sticks of the kites resemble a cross. I believe that kites are also wonderful symbols of resurrection, ascension, and eternal life.

Now I am a bereaved father. My son, Max Benjamin Rausch, died two years ago in May when he was fifteen and one half months old. I never flew kites with Max. Born in January, he was much too young to participate in kite flying during his first spring, and in his second spring he died. Immediately after Max's funeral I fled to Cape Cod with my wife, Katherine. I was in shock and rage, clutched by a deep, numbing sadness. "Why should Max have to get sick and give up life?" I howled at the heavens. I remember trying to fly a kite at that time on the Cape, on the beach at Nauset, but it brought me no peace. In fact, the harsh winds broke my kite and my kite fell into the ocean. I reeled my kite in, its wood and plastic body broken and lifeless at my feet, like Max's body on the hospital bed.

Time passes, and God's grace slowly heals. I have not "gotten over" Max's death. I will grieve for Max for the rest of my own life. I now visit Max at the cemetery, then I go to a beach and fly a kite for him. And I feel a deep satisfaction and a great sense of release and peace now when I fly a kite for Max, for with my kite ascend all my sorrow, all

my joy, all my anger, all my prayers, and all my love.

Daniel Max Rausch
New Haven, CT
In Memory of my son, Max Benjamin Rausch

Reprinted from *We Need Not Walk Alone*, the national magazine of The Compassionate Friends.
Copyright 1997

To Dee,

As this writing says – your tragic death was an "unfair event" in our eyes and our hearts. But our God sees all of time at a glance and knows the why's and the reasons and we continue to trust him for the answers one day. Until then, our hearts ache to be with you once more and never to be separated again! Happy 45th birthday in Heaven, Princess!

*With Love, from all of your family
Mom and Dad
Gary and Diane Hochstetler*

LOVE LIVES ON

Amanda Bradley

Those we love are never really lost to us--
We feel them in so many special ways--
through friends they always cared about
and dreams they left behind,
in beauty that they added to our days ...
in words of wisdom we still carry with us
and memories that never will be gone ...
Those we love are never really lost to us--
For everywhere their special love lives on.

Submitted by Lisa Hohman, Darryl's Mom

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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
May / June 2018

Issue of
The Compassionate Friend is

April 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

March / April 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.