



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
2020**

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Next Meeting

**Wednesday
March 4th**

**Wednesday
April 1st**

**Location,
see p. 3**

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Jason Wilshe

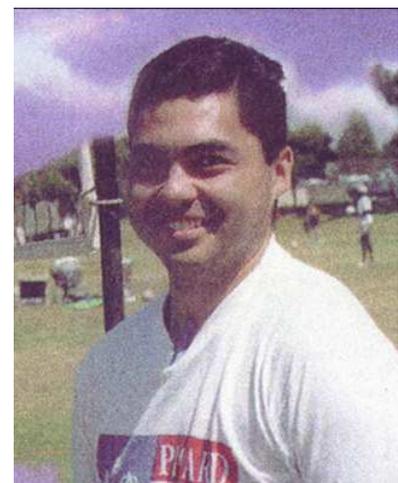


Dee Louise Hochstetler

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Vince Lopez



Darryl Hohman

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 El Cajon, CA 92019
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 Phone toll free (877) 969-0010
 Web Site: www.compassionatefriends.org/

Donations and Love Gifts

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

- ♥ Karen & Ken Wilshe — In Loving Memory of their son Jason. "Happy birthday Jason."
 - ♥ Diane & Gary Hochstetler — In Loving Memory of their daughter Dee Louise.
 - ♥ Barbara Lopez — In Loving Memory of her son Vince.
 - ♥ Del & Lisa Hohman — In Loving Memory of their son Darryl.
-

Why Me? I ask
I fail to see,

Why I was chosen

At this cost

To live this life of loss

Why were they taken away

When we needed them to stay,

But.....I have learned along the way

There are many others that understand

So they say.

We need not walk alone

We have the Compassionate Friends.

by Barbara Lopez

in memory of my sons

♥ Vince and Gary ♥

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 (619) 371-2335

ALCOHOL RELATED Elizabeth Richardson (619) 280-1832

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

Meeting Place and Times

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

North Clairemont Recreation Center
4421 Bannock Ave.
San Diego, CA 92117

From I-805 take Clairemont Mesa Blvd. head west, turn left (south) on Genesee Ave., two blocks, right turn (west) to Bannock Ave.; turn left into second driveway, second building. Enter parking lot. (Recreational area) Enter building, meeting in room #2. Genesee Ave. runs north and south about one mile or so west of I-805 and can be accessed from Clairemont Mesa Blvd.; Balboa Ave.; 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.

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 May/ June issue is April 15.



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
Jason Lee Hansen, 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
Alan H. Balsam, born 4-2
Alexander Joseph Niazi, born 4-8
Mary Ann Valdez, , born 4-8
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
Teresa Bowers, 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
Jameson Connor Segel, died 3-6
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
Ronald Jack Drew, died 4-20
Spencer Keni Watts, died 4-22
***Jamie Morgan Mychael Bratton-McNeeley,
left his body 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



43rd TCF National Conference
July 24-26, 2020 • Atlanta, GA

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 43rd TCF National Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA on July 24-26, 2020. "Sharing Sweet Memories of Love" is the theme of this year's event, which promises more of last year's great National Conference experience. This year's conference will be held at the [Atlanta Marriott Marquis](#), 265 Peachtree Center Avenue in downtown Atlanta. 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.

- Choose to attend from nearly hundred different workshops and sharing sessions, given by professionals and also individuals just like you.
- Take advantage of "Healing Haven" to receive free personal services such as a massage.
- Craft items to commemorate the love for your family member in the "Crafty Corner".
- Step away for a quiet moment of pause in the "Reflection Room".

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Pre-registration will be available in March.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Our hotel block is now officially open for the 2020 TCF National Conference in Atlanta. Reservations can be made [online](#) or by calling Marriott Reservations directly at (866) 469-5475 and ask for the group rate for The Compassionate Friends 2020 Annual Conference.

New Location Update:

TCF is moving meeting location again; the first meeting at new location is not until May 6th. It's a newer building, more room, dividers and kitchen.

The meetings for March and April remain at same address at 4421 Bannock Ave.

We are sharing this advance notice so as to make everyone aware of the move in May.

Directions for new location: Nobel Recreation Center at 8810 Judicial Drive.

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 (2nd Bldg.) There'll be a few stairs, few steps more, entrance to right. Walkway near. Ample parking. (Nobel Drive runs east – west about one mile north of hwy. 52)

Going south on I 805 take La Jolla Village Drive exit and head west. Turn left on Towne Center Drive. Turn left on to Nobel Drive, then left onto Judicial Drive.



*Another year – another New Year's Eve – 25 have now gone by since the night we lost you so suddenly. The light and joy left my life 1-1-95 - the day you went to heaven. You gave life to several people as a result of your death. We've never heard, but I hope they appreciated your gift of life to them. I will forever wonder why God allowed your early death – certainly He must know the daily pain and loss I feel – like a once fruitful tree, now terribly battered by life's storms. My hope and joy are looking forward to our reunion in heaven – when I can hold you once again and stroke your beautiful strawberry blond hair. That day cannot come too soon, but until then I will remember with love and overwhelming joy, the day God sent you to us – March 21, 1973. Happy 47th birthday –
♥Dee in Heaven.*

*Love from your Mom,
Diane Hochstetler*



A REMNANT

Posted on February 6th, 2020

A Remnant

I am a wretched seamstress, although there have been numerous attempts on my part over the years to remedy that. At this point, I am fairly content with my ability to sew on a button. I can also, with help, produce a pretty snazzy pillowcase.

During those previous attempts to acquire some skill, I did have to occasionally venture into a fabric store. In most fabric stores, there is a “remnant table.” Leftover pieces from bolts of fabric. Often not in sufficient quantity to make much of anything. Always sold at a discount. Sometimes a very steep discount.

These scraps may be from fabric that never was anything more than cheap. It may be a design or color that has gone out of fashion. In some cases, it may be a small fragment of something that was once a fine, valuable fabric. But what does one do with such a leftover?

I sometimes think of myself now as a remnant, a trace of the person I used to be before my son died. Whether the fabric that was my former self was cheap cotton, gaudy polyester, sturdy woven wool, or a finely made silk is up for debate. But here I am a remnant, wondering what to make of what is left. Or, indeed, sometimes wondering if it is even worth the effort.

I guess one option is to sort of throw myself in the proverbial trash heap. But I try...most of the time? some of the time?...to find ways to be useful and productive and engaged. I try to stay off the trash heap. I try to make something out of what is left.



PEGGI JOHNSON

After adopting two children, Peggi resigned from her corporate career in telecommunications and devoted herself to full time motherhood. When her son, Jordan, died by suicide at the age of 19, Peggi, her husband Jeff, and her daughter Claire were devastated and dumbfounded. They joined the Arlington, VA Chapter of TCF and Peggi edited the newsletter for six chapters in the Washington, DC area for two years. After her husband's retirement, they relocated to Charlottesville, VA where they joined the Piedmont, VA TCF Chapter. Peggi previously served as chapter co-leader and edited the chapter newsletter. She is a volunteer for hospice and writes articles for TCF.

You Coulda Been a Contender

In the 1954 film classic *On the Waterfront*, Marlon Brando delivers this line with great anguish: "I coulda been a contender!" I am a fan of classic films. This particular film was made when I was two years old but I have nonetheless grown to value it. I think that line meant, "I could have made a difference." When I ponder the friends and family who have vanished – or those who still exist but on the fringes - since the death of my son, I lament the loss of their presence. They could have been contenders.

I am immensely grateful for the friends and family who have stubbornly insisted on remaining by my side, in spite of my broken, wounded, and often difficult new self. They may miss the "Peggi" I once was (I miss her, too!) but with tremendous gentleness, they lovingly embrace the Peggi I am now.

While I deeply regret this and while I carry no small amount of shame about it, I can't stop myself from wringing my hands over the "ones who got away." I wish I could let them go, just as you release a balloon when you lose your grip on the attached string. No one stays rooted in one spot forever waiting for a balloon to come back. Still, I find myself waiting for those who went away to come back.

I am plagued by "intrusive thoughts." Thoughts unbidden; thoughts unwanted. Thoughts that show up despite my best efforts. I try to make them go away. Usually, I fail.

I can't seem to stop myself from wondering how these former intimates explain their disappearance to themselves. It's not as though I was a casual acquaintance. I am referring to relationships that survived decades. Relationships where we played important roles in each other's lives. Relationships I thought would endure to the end of my days.

Maybe they don't think of me at all?? Perhaps that's it. Maybe they think I have conveniently disappeared. The famed Holocaust survivor, author, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel wrote, "The opposite of love isn't hate. It's indifference." I don't think these former confidants

hate me, but their disappearance certainly makes them seem indifferent.

I know, for sure, there are lingering reminders of my existence. I appear in many of their family photos. There is evidence of me in social media. They encounter others – more casual acquaintances – who must ask, "So, how is Peggi?"

I wonder: what do they say?

"She's changed."

No kidding.

"She's different now."

How could I **not** be different after losing my son?

"Well, you really can't have fun with her anymore."

Do you know the word "shallow"?

"It makes me so upset to know how she suffers."

Really? How terribly selfish of me.

"I think she just prefers to be left alone."

That's what YOU think? It's not what I think!

"I just don't know what to say to her."

Ever thought of listening?

"She doesn't have the same beliefs anymore that I have."

Our friendship is over because I left that one particular tribe?

"She just won't move on. She can't get over it."

Please tell me which one of your children you could lose and be okay with it. Which one would you "get over?"

The point is that I don't know what they say. I am making it all up. I don't know because they went away. The conversation is over.

Then, there are the relationships I feel are "weird." The people who can't seem to let go completely but aren't really there. They have become phantom relationships. I don't see these people in person; I don't talk to them on the phone. But I periodically and erratically get email or social media "communications."

In her book **Shattered Assumptions**, Ronnie Janoff-Bulman writes: "For those people who place a high value on the norms of caring, altruism, and

sympathy, the discomfort elicited by victims results in considerable ambivalence. They know they should express care and concern, yet they are extremely uncomfortable in their interactions. These are people who may want to react appropriately and in a caring manner, yet their personal discomfort is often belied by more subtle responses." The dilemma for me is what to do about those people. The erratic contact is more painful in some ways than no contact at all.

There are those who advise that some people "can't" be there for the long haul. There are some who suggest certain people can be the "fire fighters," the ones who are there in the immediate aftermath, but can't be there for the distance running, because that's not "them." That's not what they do.

I'm not willing to let "them" off that easy. Once you know this is a marathon and not a sprint, adjust your pace. But show up. Don't leave the race!

I deeply resent that the fire fighters had access to intimate moments and intimate information. I never foresaw that I couldn't trust them with that. It makes me feel vulnerable and I don't need to feel any more vulnerable than a bereaved mother already feels.

This I do know: as if losing my beloved 19-year-old son wasn't enough, these are secondary injuries. Again I look to the book **Shattered Assumptions**: "The responses of other people, particularly close family members and friends, play a vital role in survivors' efforts to reconstruct their inner world. If people fail to be supportive – if they turn away – what greater evidence is there that the world is truly malevolent and the victim is not a worthy individual?"

Regardless of what these people have told themselves about their choice to not support me, I have this message: you are wrong. You could have made a difference. You could have been a support. You could have encouraged me. You could have helped me carry this burden I must bear the rest of my life.

"You coulda been a contender." But you weren't. You aren't. I think you blew it.

*Peggi Johnson
Piedmont, VA TCF*

Benchmarks

Good bye would be too difficult,
Although I know you are gone.
Instead, I keep you in my heart
And your memory lives on.

I have redefined my purpose, son,
Since you are no longer here.
With your death I faced a choice
To die, exist or to live free.

My life has changed forever, child,
I'm redefined each week,
You would call these "benchmarks"
Of goals set and then achieved.

And so I set my benchmarks,
Achieving many, reshaping some...
But everything is different now
Except your mother's love.

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

Beautiful Dream

Eyes open wide
I awake from a beautiful dream
Within seconds the painful reality of my life sets in
I find myself wanting to scream

Grief so strong
Impossible to explain
Living with a broken heart
Struggling with the pain

Eyes closed tight
I pray for that beautiful dream
A short escape from the painful reality
That makes me want to scream

Robert Willis
TCF, Frederick, MD

Pity Party

I feel that every day I engage in a battle with my very own personal adversary. It plagues me and pursues me relentlessly. It has many tricks. It's a master at the "sneak attack." My adversary's name is Self-Pity.

I know the mistakes I'm making in this daily battle. I am supposed to ask "Why not me?" instead of "Why me?" I'm supposed to focus on the things and people I have and not on what I have lost. But there's a significant gap between knowing in my head what I'm supposed to do and actually being able to do it.

My most effective defense against it is to focus on people who are enduring a similar loss; I hold them in my heart and mind. I am grateful that because of The Compassionate Friends, they have names and faces and are real to me. I also try to remember those who inspire me by the way they endure different challenges, such as serious illness or financial misfortunes. However, this perspective takes effort and energy. Energy is in short supply for me.

I try not to give in to it, my Self-Pity beast.

It's hard when my son's friends and classmates are graduating from college and have photos of their celebrations all over Facebook (note to self: it is not a good idea to look at Facebook).

I don't understand why it's called a "pity party." It sure doesn't feel like a party. It feels like a war.

Peggi Johnson
TCF Arlington, VA

Open Letter to Our Siblings

Dear Sibling,

How can I possibly tell you how much I miss you? But of course you probably know - since you knew me better than anyone. No matter how much time passes, I still wish you were here to share our lives and the future I expected us to have together.

Even though we fought and at times neglected each other, I just assumed that you would always be there. That we'd grow old together and remember stories of growing up and laugh at each other as we looked and acted more like our parents. That we'd share our joys and setbacks, and adore each other's children.

Your death has rocked me harder than I could imagined I'd survive. Ultimately, there are no answers to my questions. There is no replacing you and there is no solace for my grief.

There is only the simple choice I make every day to live on in the honor of your memory and the love we shared. To strive to carry on the best of who you were. To cherish the brief time we have with others. To celebrate the opportunity to be alive. To have compassion for the pain of others as well as my own. To have the courage to love fully as I have loved you and to remember that you would want me to go on and find joy again.

You gave me so many gifts while you were alive and I continue to discover the gifts in this loss. I am so thankful you were born my sibling. I would not have traded our time together for anything. You are always with me because you are a part of me.

Mary Lamourex
TCF Marin County, CA

*There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept,
things we don't want to know but have to learn,
and people we can't live without but have to let go. ~ author unknown*

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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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Charlene Tate
caricat83@hotmail.com

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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 May / June 2020

Issue of The Compassionate Friend is

April 15, 2020

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

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March / April 2020

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:

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

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.