



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.



September /
October
2018

Issue 139

Dedication and
Love Gifts 1-2

Mission Statement
Meeting Location 3

Telephone Friends
Loved, Missed and
Remembered 4

Articles 5-10

Websites
Steering Committee 11

**Location,
see p. 3**

Next Meeting

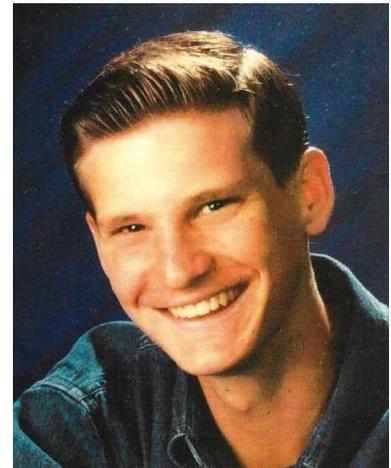
Wednesday
September 5th

Wednesday
October 3rd

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Cynthia Lee Kessler



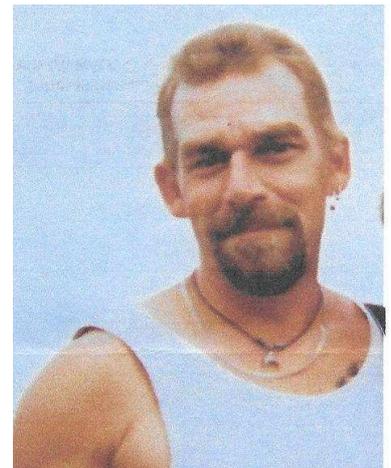
Ethan Estin Wozniak

♥ **Always In Our Hearts** ♥

1



Cash Kamins



Duane Charles Alley

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

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

The National Office of TCF
P. O. Box 3696
Oakbrook, IL 60522-3696
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.

- ♥ **Jennifer Kamins and family — In Loving Memory of their son Cash.**
- ♥ **Steve & Suzanne Wozniak — In Loving Memory of their son Ethan.**
- ♥ **Gordon R. Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia**
- ♥ **Louise Hendrickson — In Loving Memory of her son Duane.** As yet another birthday of yours approaches gone are the fun days of Tonka trucks, Star Wars figures and Guns and Roses albums. Instead a visit to the cemetery with a single red rose and countless tears will mark this day. Memories will fill my mind and maybe just maybe a slight smile will shine through those tears. I miss you son with all my being... and wait for the day when we will be reunited. I love you son, Mom XO

In Memory of my sons, Vince and Gary

I Never Believed....

I never believed I would see another season change with gladness. I never believed I would see the world again without the haze of tears. I never expected to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for another day when I would not want to die. I never envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of promise. I believed that all that had passed from me the day they died and went away, never to return. But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness of your grieving, you too will come to understand that life goes on--that it can still have meaning-- that even joy can touch your life once more.

**By
Don Hackett TCF**

Submitted by Barbara Lopez



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



Birthdays

Ronald Paul Jones, born 9-1
Creta (CJ) Smith, born 9-4
Dan Gerald Bruce, born 9-6
Klay Budz, born 9-7
Megan Ashley Landis, born 9-8
Lindsey Faye Whelchel, born 9-8
Blake Christopher Whelchel, born 9-9
Vincent Glen Ruddy, born 9-10
George Brers IV, born 9-13
Guy Charles Green, born 9-14
Duane Charles Alley, born 9-16
Brian Michael Bennett, born 9-19
Vinny Palermo, born 9-21
Aubrey Apodaca, born 9-24
Brent Foster Whelchel, born 9-24
Lucas Daniel Giaconelli, born 9-30
Michelle Weihe, born 10-1
Kristina Michelle Bennett, born 10-07
Mark Metz, born 10-7
Joshua Michael Jensen, born 10-10
Ethan Estin Wozniak, born 10-10
Brian James Gillis, born 10-11
Kathleen Bohanon, born 10-12
Jennifer Ann Donnell, born 10-12
Nathaniel Poteat, born 10-12
Skip Anaya-Summers, born 10-16
Renee Eleonor Dawson, born 10-17
Jennifer Ann Greenwald, born 10-24
Pamela Broderick, born 10-24
David Sullivan, born 10-25
Brad Huska, born 10-26
Michael Dylkiewicz, born 10-28
Leonard Valadez, born 10-31

Anniversaries

Ryan McDonough, died 9-3
Nicole Clark, died 9--3
Blake Christopher Whelchel, died 9-4
Cynthia Lee Kessler, died 9-6
Alexander Nicholas Model, died 9-15
Matthew Steven Spiewak, died 9-9
Vince Lopez, died 9-12
Jason Lee Hansen, died 9-13
Terest Bowers, died 9-15
Ron Laverty, died 9-16
Jered Dillard, died 9-18
Stephen William Anderson, died 9-19
Nicholas Ferrell, died 9-20
Michelle Weihe, died 9-24
Aubrey Apodaca, died 9-28
William Scott Virdee, died 9-27
Spencer Clay, died 9-30
Lawrence O'Brien, died 10-3
Matthew Scott Lewis, died 10-5
Amanda Harrington, died 10-6
Kai Wright, died 10-9
Duane Charles Alley, died 10-10
Vince Lopez, died 10-12
Emil Ian de la Barrera, died 10-18
Julie Elizabeth Richardson, died 10-21
Michael Scott Ayers, died 10-24
Rory David Boyer, died 9-28
Brittany Dawn Williams, died 10-29
Davey Johnson, died 10-30



The Compassionate Friends
San Diego, CA Chapter
Supporting families after a child dies.

Annual Memorial Balloon Release Picnic

Sunday, September 23, 2018

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch 12:00 Noon, Balloon Release 1:00 PM



Admiral Baker Field

2400 Admiral Baker Rd.
San Diego, CA 92120

Bring your family for a day of memories and friendship
Please bring your child's favorite side dish to share
The Compassionate Friends will provide the meat dish and drinks
No Pets Please



Directions: I-15 to Friars Road. Head East for about one mile
Make a left turn onto Santo Road
Take immediate right onto Admiral Baker Road
Go downhill into the parking lot

And Then There Were Two.....

Ten years ago my son and his wife were blessed with identical triplet daughters. The girls were all tiny, and the prognosis was solid for two of them. Caitlin, Julia and Lauren were born on the 18th of April. It started out as a happy day. Todd was in the delivery room, camera in hand, as each girl was placed in an incubator. First out of the delivery room was Lauren, content but tiny. After about 25 minutes Julia was ushered out in her little portable incubator. We waited a very long time for Caitlin. Finally she was brought out, many nurses and doctors surrounded her incubator. I stood near the elevator and waited for them. I looked at her....hand respirator for breathing, intravenous lines, blue in color, and tears streamed down my face. "Are you a relative?" one of the nurses asked. I told them I was a grandmother. "Would you like to look at her for a few seconds?" The nurse could see my sorrow. All eyes avoided mine. I looked at Caitlin and knew, I just knew, this would not end well.

Todd came out to the hall, still wearing scrubs. He was happy and beaming, but expressed concern about Caitlin. I nodded. He asked me if I'd seen her. I nodded again. He told me they had taken her to a corner of the delivery room and spent a long time with her. I nodded again. "It's not good, is it mom?" he asked. I shook my head and hugged him. I told him how beautiful they all were and that the other two were healthy despite their size.

Todd spent some time with his wife, then proceeded to visit his three daughters. When he got to the neonatal ICU he knew that he would be staying there. We all scrubbed and went to see the babies. We touched their little feet. But we weren't allowed to see Caitlin. Only Todd was allowed in her area. My son stayed in the neonatal ICU with Caitlin. He got to know the nurses and doctors and other parents while he was visiting with Julia who was also in level 1. I left the hospital about 10:30 p.m. Todd remained in the neonatal unit with Caitlin.

The next morning I awoke to a phone call from Todd. He'd spent the night with Caitlin. She was still hand bagged, a nurse was manually pumping air into her lungs. He thought she had a

chance. He would stay with her, he said. About 11 am he called and we talked. He hadn't eaten anything, and I asked what he would like as I was driving down to the hospital. "You don't have to do that, mom", he said. But I knew I had to be there.

I arrived with the special food he'd requested and we sat in the visitors' lounge outside the neonatal area. Todd was hungry and exhausted. We talked. "I don't know what I'll do if she dies, mom", he cried. I cried, too. I knew what was coming and I knew it would be soon. I told him that if she were meant to live, she would live. He didn't want to accept that.

We walked to his wife's room for a quick visit and the phone rang. The family needed to return immediately to the neonatal ICU. Todd pushed his wife's wheelchair, her mother and I walked silently through the tunnels. The long walk was punctuated by the clicking of heels on the concrete floor. The tunnel echoed. None of us said anything. There were no words. This was the worst time.

We arrived at the neonatal unit and were immediately ushered into a special room. A nurse was still providing manual respiration for Caitlin. The doctors said it was hopeless and this couldn't continue. Her heart and lungs were not developed. Todd reached over and touched his tiny daughter, tears rolling down his face onto her little blanket. His heart was broken. Caitlin was disconnected from the tubes and the manual respiration was stopped. Todd's wife held Caitlin and then Todd held her. I stood behind my son, hand on his shoulder, watching him as he suffered this unimaginable and immense pain. Pain that I couldn't cure. Todd asked if I wanted to hold her. I said, "you hold her, she knows your voice. I'll hold her later." Caitlin's little cap fell off. Her eyes were closed, her mouth a tiny rosebud with lips slightly parted. I touched her arm and head. "She's gone, sweetheart", I whispered. The nurse came over, checked vitals and confirmed a grandmother's intuition. I hugged Todd and told him that this was the worst pain he would ever endure. He wept and his body shook from shock, pain and exhaustion.

We lingered for a while, looking at the baby whose life was never meant to be. Finally, all left the room but me. Caitlin was peacefully wrapped in her little blanket, a beautiful child whose time had come. I touched her sweet face and tiny hands. Her soul was gone, but her fight for life both before and after her birth touched my Irish heart.

Later Todd told his son, "Caitlin didn't make it, Buddy." His son crawled up on his lap and patted Todd's head and arm. There were no words. We were all devastated.

Now it is I who weep for my lost child. Todd was killed December 19, 2002, and his pain is now my pain. The proud father of five, a man whose life was so extraordinary, whose attitude was so upbeat, whose love for his children was so deep and profound, whose accomplishments were so significant, was now gone. I like to think that he has joined Caitlin and together they are happy.

Thinking of that day, 10 years ago, brings tears to my eyes. I love my son more than life. I couldn't imagine his pain. Now I live his pain. My only child was ripped from my life. Life isn't fair, life isn't equitable. There is no reason. It just is. I no longer have to keep it together for my son as I did on April 19, 1995. I no longer try. If I have a bad day, that's the way it is. If my friends don't like my tears or my sorrow, there's nothing to be said. If others don't like the ways I choose to memorialize and remember my child, that's fine. Those who know me, really know me, understand that my pain is deep and it is forever. My tears are pure and cleansing. Life will never be as good as it was. The love for my child is real. He lives on in my heart. He is my inspiration to go on, to keep on living, to make the best of what I am given. For that is what he did. I keep him in my heart.....he is one special son.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In Memory of Todd Mennen and Caitlin Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX

On Gratitude

My feet were cold from the icy pavement as I waited for the morning bus. The bitter winter was receding and I was working hard on gratitude. I bent my head deeper into my scarf and saw a penny in the street.

I had just returned from a regional meeting of The Compassionate Friends in Green Bay, Wisconsin. A presenter held up his 'Pennies from Heaven' and declared that signs from our loved ones are everywhere. I wonder...

I picked up that penny and found my reading glasses.

I work on gratitude with some skepticism. Was this a treasure or just a muddy little coin? The date imprinted in the copper became clear—1983—the year my son was born.

Surprise and tears triggered by that date immediately washed across my face. I no longer felt cold. I meandered through memories of a day in July some 20+ years ago when I delivered that child.

"Collect yourself," I said to myself under my breath. I might scare my mass transit bus mates. In the cold air I turned my face away from the others and watched my breath puff into icy clouds.

The bus appeared and I boarded with everyone else. I was a penny richer that day and grateful beyond measure for the treasure trove of memories that lay in my hand.

Monica Colberg
TCF Minneapolis, MN
In Memory of my son Art

“STUFF”

I travel a lot and spend a great deal of time in airports. I spend so much time in airports that I no longer want to collect frequent-flyer miles, but rather, the hours I've spent waiting for airplanes that are late, lost, or nonexistent. I am always prepared to spend those hours constructively by traveling with my laptop computer, a small carry-on that can support my needs for several days if necessary, and a good book.

I spend most of my airport time working or reading, but sometimes it's fun to watch the never-ending stream of humanity making its way down the walkways, heading blindly toward someplace. I also love to watch that endless human tide board aircraft, carrying all manner of “stuff” that they then try to place in the overhead compartments, despite the repeated pleas of flight personnel to “utilize the space beneath the seat in front of you.” I have learned a lot from these observations. Traveling is a lot like grieving. We are headed somewhere with high hopes, little preparation, and too much baggage for any single human to carry.

We have become a society that defines itself by its “stuff.” We measure our “stuff.” We sort it, count it, store it, move it, treasure it, and discard it, only to retrieve it again. Our stuff is simply who we are and without it, we risk becoming lost, disoriented, and disconnected. This stuff simply has to come with us at all times!

Grief is part of our stuff, too. Our experiences get boiled down to a few essential memories, phrases, and images that seem to become necessary to hold on to. It would be easier if we would pick and choose which memories to keep and which to toss. We could, perhaps, get away with a smaller version of who we are if we only knew we did not have to fear forgetting anything that has happened to us and felt more comfortable carrying fewer reminders of the hurt and more symbols of the joys.

Trying to pack for a trip means assembling the vast amount of “necessary stuff” and deciding what can be taken and what can't. We all have seen people who obviously cannot live without everything they own crammed into one carry-on, while others figure a small reminder or two will be enough.

Grievers are like that, too. Some seem to be able to release much of the pain and horror far sooner, while others stash it away, buried deep

within themselves, only to emerge at the least convenient moment. Some try to cram a steamer trunk into the overhead compartment, having wrestled everyone else's stuff to the floor or simply moved it to another bin. Some try to compartmentalize their hurts with the idea that hurt and grief can be dealt with in an orderly and logical fashion.

But you can't pack away grief in the same way you can toss stuff into a suitcase and then stash it on a shelf until you are ready to deal with it. Grief simply is a part of our fabric, woven into each fiber of our being, always with us, but not always recognized or even acknowledged. It nudges us, calls us, teases us, hurts us at the least touch. Grief demands to be heard, and when we turn a deaf ear, it grows louder and more persistent until we grow weary trying to ignore it.

We can sort it out, roll it up tightly, pack it carefully, lock it away, or even carry it around with us, but we cannot ignore it forever. It returns again and again until we learn to embrace it, wrestle with it, and adapt to its flow. If we are lucky, we learn to carry the load we have without too much guilt or anger and have found ways to release the emotions that accompany our grief. Like our “stuff,” grief defines a part of who we are, but not all of who we are. The trick is to figure out which parts are grief-born and which parts are joy-based. If you are lucky, you'll discover, some day, that it is all the same and that grief truly is the price we pay for loving someone. I am glad I bought the ticket, paid the price, shared the journey, and have a memento or two from the ride. It is often lonely, sometimes hard, but never boring. Trying to carry it all with you isn't possible, but neither is ignoring it all and hoping it will go away

So, pack what you truly need, give the rest away, and get going on your travels. Each breath takes you closer to your destination, even if you don't know where that is. Learn to let some things go so you can pack lighter next time. You could let go of some of the guilt or fear or anger or hurt. How about weeding through the awful parts so you can get to the loving parts? Don't discard it without embracing it first, but once you have examined the whole picture, let go of the “stuff” you no longer need to carry in order to define yourself. Let go of the labels and the worries.

Will it happen again? It could. Will I be able to handle it better next time? Maybe. Will I ever find love like that again? Not unless you look for it. Will I forget? Not likely. Maybe that is why we believe we need so much stuff around us all the time. Maybe we are really afraid of losing it all, not just the bad parts, but the good times as well. Do we carry too much, save too much, pack too much because we are afraid?

Just as you have never forgotten the name of the very first person you fell in love with, you will not forget your child. If we let go of that fear, we all can travel a bit lighter. Fear is a heavy burden to carry. You cannot forget love that has been given and received. You cannot forget the exchange of heart and soul. You don't need the stuff in order to remember the love.

Love is the size of a sigh, as light as a kiss, as gentle as a whisper, and as small as a moment in time. It comes in all sizes and shapes and cannot be saved until later. Love simply IS, and you *have* been loved. So lighten up. Carry less, live more, and love a lot. Love is a good thing to carry and really the ONLY ESSENTIAL thing we need!

Darcie D. Sims

Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS, is a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She is the author of several books. Darcie is also an internationally recognized speaker and has served on several boards, including the National Board of Directors for The Compassionate Friends. Darcie received The Compassionate Friends Professional Award in 1999. She is president and co-founder of GRIEF, Inc., a grief consulting business.

(She died several years ago. We do miss her).

The Loving Listener

One day last month, seemingly out of nowhere, my dark and dreaded companion "grief" came roaring back in to my life. Just as I thought I was "doing all right," grief came once again to wrench, rip, and tear at the thin delicate membrane of scar tissue that had formed over the wound in my heart, that I had foolishly believed allowed me to be normal again. I was in unbearable agony. I thought, "Oh my God, I can't believe I ever hurt this bad. How did I ever survive this agony?" I finally pulled myself together as best I could and reached out to one of our beautiful angels of mercy. I called our "Loving Listener." "Hi, do you have a minute?" She chirped "Absolutely!" I went on to pour out my heart to her. She listened patiently. She offered no quick fixes or advice, trite phrases, or empty platitudes. She just spiritually embraced me and suffered along with me; quietly offering her love, compassion and understanding. When most of my pain and sorrow had finally emptied out, I realized it was coming up on the anniversary death date of my child. It would mark five years since the death of my beloved daughter Angela. This was the catalyst that had plunged me back into the abyss of grief. I could not bear the thought that my beautiful child had been dead for a half a decade. As soon as I realized what had caused this awful digression, I began to feel a little better. If your chapter has a Loving Listener, please give them a call. They will give you solace, comfort and companionship. We Need Not Walk Alone.

Janet G. Reyes
TCF Alamo Area Chapter, TX

We are happy to announce we have a new webmaster. Jason Kha has offered his assistance in updating and maintaining our website. Thank you Jason.

From the Conference at St Louis: a couple pictures shared by the Keyzers.



Candle Lighting activity



David and Ruth Keyser, with poster of their son Daniel, share a real moment in time



The Memory Garden is located next to the Garden of Innocence
El Camino Memorial Park
5600 Carroll Canyon Road
(Sorrento Valley off the 805 at Mira Mesa)

Our San Diego Chapter of TCF has been given a lovely garden next to the Garden of Innocence. Our garden contains large granite tablets on which any family can purchase 2, 3 or 4 lines of engraving dedicated to their child's memory. For information contact Lisa Hohman 619-287-4253.

**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS
SAN DIEGO CHAPTER
STEERING COMMITTEE**

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS Lisa Hohman
(619)-287-4253
Sandi Terrell
(619) 562-3949

TREASURER Murray Westrich
(949)-800-5183

SECRETARY Teresa de La Barrera
(858)-452-1383

NEWS-LETTER EDITORS Del Hohman
us030424@cox.net

OUTREACH Lisa Hohman
(619)-287-4253

REFRESH-MENTS Debbi Montisano
(858) 274-5724

LIBRARIAN Grace Saputo
Gmsaputo@gmail.com

SUPPORT:

Barbara Lopez
Kathy Shott
kjshott@yahoo.com
Lynn & Norval Lyon
Lindy.Lyon@gmail.com
Elene Bratton
Yvonne & Lucien Bennett-Niang
ybennettniang@yahoo.com

Web Master	Jason Kha webmaster@sdtcf.org
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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)

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
November / December 2018

Issue of The Compassionate Friend is

October 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

September / October 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.