



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 2021

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Next Meetings

In Person Meeting
Legacy Church Through December
See page 3

Wednesday September 1st

Wednesday October 6th

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Kristina Michelle Bennett

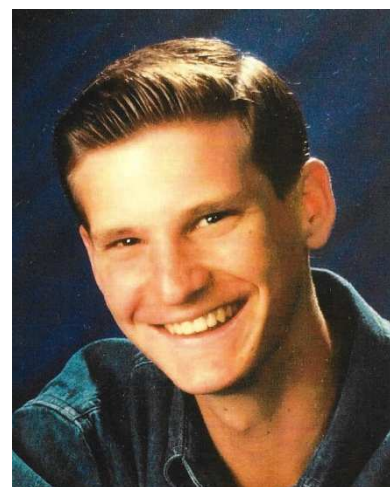


Cynthia Lee Kessler

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Philippe Leyva



Ethan Estlin Wozniak

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Donations and Love Gifts

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

- ♥ Gordon R. Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia.
- ♥ Yvonne & Lucien Bennett-Niang — In loving Memory of their daughter. “Death took your body. Our mind holds memories of you. Our hearts keep our love for you always. Our faith lets us know. We will meet again”. Dad & Mom.
- ♥ Steve & Suzanne Wozniak — In Loving Memory of their son Ethan.
- ♥ Gloria Hurtado — In Loving Memory of her son Philippe.

Things we miss about Phillippe:

- We miss the noise that was Phillippe; you always knew when he was in the house. First, because he always announced his arrival; but also, because he generated so much energy.
- We miss the intelligent and passionate conversation on so many topics whether it be politics, sports, music, food or wine.
- We miss the way he connected with people, always so warm and welcoming, engaging and making people feel part of the family.
- We miss him at every family event; always entertaining and the first to get the dancing started.
- We miss the music Phillippe shared with us, especially the individualized playlists. He made every song better when he sang along and included you.
- We miss the joy of watching him with his young nieces, nephews, cousins and goddaughter. He truly enjoyed each and every one and they adored him.
- We miss his mischief, fearlessness and laughter.
- We miss the phone calls, the text messages, the hugs, the noise and the love.
- We miss the way he tried to fix things- whether it was disagreements among friends or family conflicts. Phillippe always tried to make things better.

For those who knew and loved Phillippe, we miss him every day.

♥ Phillippe's Mom Gloria Hurtado



***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
Mario De La Rosa, Born 9-15
Duane Charles Alley, born 9-16
Brian Michael Bennett, born 9-19
Philippe Leyva, born 9-22
Aubrey Apodaca, born 9-24
Brent Foster Whelchel, born 9-24
Michelle Weihe, born 10-1
Kristina Michelle Bennett, born 10-07
Mark Metz, born 10-7
Joshua Michael Jensen, born 10-10
Ethan Estlin Wozniak, born 10-10
Brian James Gillis, born 10-11
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
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
Matthew Steven Spiewak, died 9-9
Vince Lopez, died 9-12
Jason Lee Hansen, died 9-13
Teresa Bowers, died 9-15
Alexander Nicholas Model, 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
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 Picnic

Sunday, September 26, 2021

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch 12:00 Noon



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

Balloon Release activity not permitted in the Park this year.

We have shared many balloon releases through the years at our picnics.

Times are changing! We will provide mementos to honor and remember our children.

Directions: I-15 to Friars Road. Head east for about half a mile

Make a left turn onto Santo Road. Take immediate right onto Admiral Baker Road (about ½ block)

Go downhill, right turn at bottom of hill, left turn to parking lot. Picnic site at far end of parking lot.

Slide Presentation in December

Our Annual Candle Lighting is Sunday December 12, 6:00PM – 8:00PM. Part of the ceremony is a Slide Presentation with background music. If you wish to add your lost child's photo please email digital photo to Gary Hochstetler at gshoch@cox.net as soon as possible and no later than Wed., Dec. 1st. Putting this all together is quite time-consuming. If you are computer tech savvy and would like to volunteer your help, we would appreciate it greatly! Please contact Gary at above email address.

DEATH OF A CHILD: WHAT'S IT LIKE AT 10 YEARS?

January 11, 2002 ... Ten years? Sometimes it seems like yesterday. Sometimes it seems like it never happened. Most of the time it is somewhere in between.

*[EDITOR'S NOTE: Rich Edler, 58, past president of TCF's national board, author of *Into the Valley and Out Again* and treasured friend to many in TCF's extended family, died suddenly and unexpectedly on February 16. He had completed this article for *We Need Not Walk Alone*, TCF's national magazine, just over a month earlier.]*

It has been 10 years today since Mark died.

When I wrote *Into the Valley and Out Again* I chronicled first one day, then one week, then the first month and year. Now it is 10. Here are my thoughts:

The hurt never goes away. We never forget. We never get over it. We don't want to. We hurt so much because we loved so much. But the focus on death and the event fades and the warmth of good memories replaces it. Oh, we can still go back there in an instant. Back to the call, the moment, the goodbye. Back to the night that will forever separate our life between "before" and "after." But we now go back less and less. Time helps a lot.

I have fewer friends. Better friends, mind you, but fewer. I am out of the circle now. My Rolodex is cold. My networking, which used to be razor sharp, has atrophied. My power lunches have become tuna fish sandwiches. But the amazing thing is how much I don't care. I miss some special people so I go out of my way to stay in touch. And that is enough.

I have new and different priorities. I move through life a little slower, a little more tuned to life around me, and to life gone too soon. I brake for sunsets. I hurt for the people who share this walk with me. Since Mark died, hundreds and then thousands of children have died. I feel for them and for their families in a way I could never have understood before. I value people more than things, moments more than milestones and I no longer equate what I do with who I am.

I am not having the life I expected to have. I recall an old saying, "Man plans ... God laughs." Dennis Prager, an author and Los Angeles radio talk-show host, said that unhappiness equals image minus reality. What he meant is that you are unhappy when your image of where you should be is dramatically different from where you really are.

When a child dies, the reality of the life we are going to have is altered forever. I am no longer going to be Mark's dad. I am no longer going to join him at UCLA football games. I am no longer going to be a grandfather to the children he will never have. If that gap between image and reality is a recipe for unhappiness, well, then the reverse is also true. If you "solve" the equation of happiness, happiness equals image matched closely with reality. So I have had to change my image to match the new reality.

I like my new life better. This makes me feel guilty because I would trade my life in an instant if I could have Mark back. But I really do like the person I have become since Mark died. I don't even know that person from 10 years ago. Back then my life purpose was to run a large advertising agency. Today, it is to give back in gratitude for the joy of the life I have been given. I want to make Mark proud. I want to be a blessing to others. And I want to enjoy the journey, too. I still have a grief that goes unspoken. Who will listen at 10 years? Yes, I still miss Mark. But I miss him quietly and silently. I grieve for his loss; for the loss of the person he would have become (he would be 28 now, but instead is forever 18); and also for the loss of the life I would be having if he were here.

I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I have been blessed beyond measure. I have a surviving son who has given me more joy than I could imagine any parent having ... and now a beautiful daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter. Gratitude is one of the most helpful and healing things you can do on your grief journey. And with gratitude comes thanks. So in gratitude, Kitty and I made a list this week of the people who were there for us when we needed them most. These are the people who dropped everything in their lives on a moment's phone call and rushed to our side. These are the people with whom we are joined forever, and who, no matter how far they drift, or what unimportant spats we might

(Edler continued)

have, will always have a special place in our heart. You make your own list. Then find those people wherever they are, and say thank you.

I choose joy over sadness. If there is one overriding thought in these years, including 10 TCF conferences in a row, it is simply this: Grief is inevitable; misery is optional. It does no good to sit in a hole. It does no good for the loss of one life to lead to the loss of two.

What *does* do good is doing good. To decide to lead the second part of your life *differently and better* than you would have before in your child's name. When we do that .. when we do one small act of kindness we never would have done before ... when we reach out to other bereaved parents because we can and because we have been there ... then the world is changed in some small way for the better, and then the actions we take become a living tribute to our child's life. And then that child is never entirely gone.

And that, my fellow compassionate friends, is how it looks at 10 years for me.

Rich Edler
TCF South Bay, CA
In Memory of my son Mark Edler
Spring 2002, We Need Not Walk
Alone
Reprinted with permission

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren't so crushing.” Sounds familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouchies” can compare with the hurt we feel. Nothing can touch the pain of burying a child.

Yet most of us have discovered that the sun still comes up. We still have to function. We did not

die when our child did, even though we wished we could have, so...we are stuck with this pain, this grief and what do we do with it? Surely we can't live like THIS forever!

There are no magic formulas for surviving grief. There are a few recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guidelines. What we do know is that the emptiness will never go away. It will become tolerable and livable...some day.

TIME...the longest word in our grief. We used to measure TIME by the steps of our child...the first word, first tooth, first date, first car...now we don't have that measure any more. All we have is TIME, and it only seems to make the hurt worse.

So what do we do? Give ourselves TIME...to hurt, to grieve, to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember. Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress through grief against anyone else's. Be your own timekeeper.

Don't push. Eventually you will find the hours and days of grief have turned to minutes and then moments...but don't expect them to go away. We will always hurt. You don't get over grief...it only becomes tolerable and livable. Change your focus a bit. Instead of dwelling on how much you lost, try thinking of how much you had. Try letting good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE [SHE] DIED. We don't lose the love that flowed between us...it still flows, but differently now.

Does it help to know that if we didn't love so very much, it would not hurt so badly? Grief is the price we pay for love. And as much as it hurts, I'm very glad I loved. Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of the loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

Darcie D. Sims



7 THINGS I HAVE LEARNED SINCE THE LOSS OF MY CHILD

Posted on July 21st, 2021

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 elixer for my pain, no going back in time. For as long as I breathe, I will grieve and ache and love my son

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

ANGELA MILLER

Angela Miller is an internationally known writer and speaker on grief and loss. She is the #1 bestselling author of *You Are the Mother of All Mothers*; founder of the award-winning online community ABedForMyHeart.com, and the A Bed For My Heart grief center.

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. ~ Albert Schweitzer

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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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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 2021

Issue of The Compassionate Friends is

October 15, 2021

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

September / October 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:

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.