



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
 2022
 Issue 163

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Next Meetings

In Person Meeting
 See page 3

Wednesday
 Sept. 7th

Wednesday
 October 5th

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Esther Janus

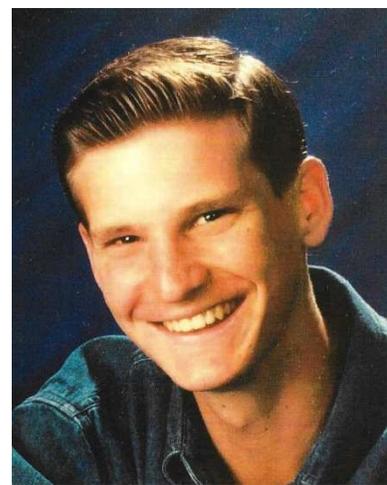


Joshua James Lubrich

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Duane Charles Alley



Ethan Estlin Wozniak

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 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.

- ♥ Steve & Suzanne Wozniak — In Loving Memory of their son Ethan.
- ♥ Yvonne & Lucien Bennett-Niang — In Loving Memory of their daughter Esther. "Esther Janus Daughter / Mother — Invincible / Unstoppable." Message from Esther's children
- ♥ Louise Hendrickson — In Loving Memory of her son Duane. "For my dear son, Duane I shed a tear each day for you since you've been gone and my heart aches more each day for you since you've been gone. Happy Birthday to you my son. Someday, someday I will be with you again. I miss you with every breath I take." Love Mom
- ♥ Sandi and Mark Terrell - In Loving Memory of Joshua (Joshy). Sorry, I missed the July/Aug Newsletter. It has been 14 years now on July 1, 2022 and not a day goes by without thinking of you. To our beloved son & brother, Joshua: "We Love You and Miss You Forever and Always!! You will always be our "Jewel" in the family, one to be "Gone But Never Forgotten!" We miss you more with each passing day! "You're still a part of everything we do; you're on our hearts, just like a tattoo, just like a tattoo, we'll always have you." Song by Jordan Sparks. Love, Mom, Dad, Best Friend Zachary, Ryan and Kiersten with granddaughter Lily Mae, Andrew and Virginia with grandsons Andrew Joshua and Austin Lee, Best Friend Jason and Brittney with grandsons Dylan Amir and Jayce Benjamin and Best Friends Forever, Persio!"

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



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
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
Samuel Michael Parente, born 9-20
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
Nathaniel Poteat, born 10-12
Renee Eleonor Dawson, born 10-17
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
Esther Janus, died 9-20
Michelle Weihe, died 9-24
Aubrey Apodaca, died 9-28
William Scott Virdee, died 9-27
Rory David Boyer, died 9-28
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



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

Annual Memorial Picnic



Sunday, September 25, 2022
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

To include .5 L of ice cold bottles of water, and apple juice for the children.

Please provide your own desired sodas or other non-alcoholic 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 butterfly 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 #7 at far end of parking lot. Signs will be available from entry into field area to new picnic site #7 (next to picnic site #8 we've had in prior years)

Slide Presentation in December

Our Annual Candle Lighting is Sunday December 11, 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 Thursday, 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.



THE KEEPER OF OUR STORIES

My sister Terri and I were lucky. We grew up in a loving home with attentive parents and a father who was an avid storyteller. Not only did he invent elaborate tales to tell us each night at bedtime, but he also shared with us stories from his own childhood – what it was like to grow up in a small town before and after World War I, what the grandparents we never knew were like when they were young. He gave us a strong appreciation for our family history.

After Dad died when I was 16, Terri and I hung onto those stories, telling and retelling them to each other. Some of them my father had typed up into a memoir and I lugged those many pages with me over the years as I moved from one house to the next. And as we got older, Terri and I created our own stories, our own memories—some poignant and emotional, others just funny moments then grew into teenagers in the 1970s.

we shared together as little girls who

We were each other's memory-keepers and fact-checkers. Many were the times one of us would call the other to verify what we remembered about a particular event. The two of us held together our past and treasured the tales we could tell to each other and to our own children about the girls we had once been.

When Terri became ill, we told and retold those stories all the more. Both of us sensed that the time we had left to share with each other was dwindling, would soon be gone, but neither of us realized just how quickly, how abruptly, that ending would come.

Terri died in January of 2015. I wasn't ready for that loss, even though I knew it was coming. In the first few months after her death, I was too stunned and grief-stricken to think about those stories, those memories. At that point I only knew that the one person who knew me better than any other person in the world was gone. Everyone in my childhood family was gone. My mother had died just two years before that. I was alone.

Of course, I still had my daughters, but they had not lived in those treasured days of my childhood. They didn't know how we once ran the vacant lots at the bottom of our street, pretending to be horses or pirates or princesses;

they didn't join us in our secret late-night swims in hotel pools or sunbathe with us in our driveway while our transistor radio filled the air with Deep Purple, the Beatles and the Stones. I began to understand that if I wanted them to have some sense of those halcyon days—before the internet and cell phones—I would have to be the one to tell them.

But I wanted those stories to last. And so I turned to my writing, creating essays and poems about my sister—about our youth, about our struggles, and about my learning to live without her. In my poems I can not only revive a moment like our catching fireflies after dark or roaming the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach—I can also examine my current feelings of loss through those memories.

There is a unique kind of loneliness that comes from being the sole survivor of a special time and a special family. Writing down what I recall, filling in mere facts with the emotions, the scents and sounds of those long-gone days, has helped me through that loneliness. Not only does it allow me to revive the moments I shared with my sister, but it also provides me a way to create something indelible that might be a solace to others – something that will survive all of us.

Melanie McCabe is a writer living in Virginia. She lost her sister Terri in 2015. She has written a memoir, as well as three collections of poems. Her latest,

The Night Divers, can be found here: <https://amzn.to/3oqAWnz>

CATHY SEEHUETTER

Cathy's 15-year-old daughter, Nina Westmoreland, was killed by an alcohol-impaired driver on Cathy's birthday while her family was vacationing in FL in May of 1995. In 2012, her police officer stepson Chris took his own life. She has been very involved as a volunteer in TCF, first as newsletter editor and then chapter leader for the St. Paul Chapter. She served for six years on the TCF National Board of Directors, and is Minnesota Regional Coordinator. Cathy was the Conference Chair for the TCF national conferences in 2011 in Minneapolis, MN, and in 2018 in St. Louis, MO.. She is very honored to have received the TCF Recognition Award from the National Board of Directors in 2015. Cathy has been published in *Chicken Soup for the Christian Family Soul*, and as a contributing writer to *The Tincture of Time, Open to Hope: Inspirational Stories of Healing After Loss*, the TCF national magazine, *We Need Not Walk Alone*, and other grief publications and newsletters. Cathy is married, has three surviving children and five grandchildren; all of whom are the loves of her life.



The Memorial 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 2 large granite tablets on which any family can purchase 2, 3 or 4 lines of engraving dedicated to their child's memory.

One granite tablet pictured above on the right has been filled. The other tablet pictured on the left was generously donated several years ago by Rob and Amy Colbert in memory of their son Matthew. Currently there are only 8 spaces available. Those wishing to add their child's inscription on the new stone can get more information from either Diane Hochstetler, Project coordinator (602-380-6888) or Lisa Hohman (619-701.5641). Inscription forms are available. Information will be made available at our monthly TCF in-person meetings as well as our online zoom meetings. The current price as of August 2022, is \$360.00.

Our TCF Garden and the Garden of Innocence are located a ways up past the Madonna Lawn which can be traveled on foot or transport by small shuttle provided by El Camino. Please inquire at the main office for Rebecca Melendez, our contact person for SDTCF. Also Flower shop personnel may be helpful in giving directions to garden site. Once you arrive at the site, you may wish to sit awhile in shade on benches provided and contemplate lovely surroundings.

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 your ability to adapt to a strange new world; one that exists without your precious child in it. A world you must step out in to and face every day without any outward signs 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 are so brave. Although no one else can see how horribly 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 once more. If you have not been to a Compassionate Friends meeting, please muster all of the strength and courage you have and 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.

The Stress Test

On my desk is a little card that measures stress. It is similar to the “mood rings” of the 1970s in nature. If I am having a good day, the color is green. If I am particularly serene, the color is blue. Sometimes the color is black or red.....these are the bad days. Black equals stress; red equals tense.

If only our real emotions were that easy to measure and quantify. If only we could touch a card or a stone and find out if we are angry, sad, depressed, withdrawn, happy, balanced or “normal”. But, this does not exist.

Instead we must rely on our subjective minds to analyze what should be a very objective situation: where are we now? Only parents who have lost a child can relate to this statement. Where am I now? Yesterday seemed good, but today is terrible. I don't even want to get out of bed.

Then the guilt sets in: it is the American way to “get on with it”. The work ethic is part of the fabric of most of our lives. Be productive. Have accomplishments. Do things, tackle projects, keep on moving, moving, moving.

Sometimes that moving is really running: running from our demons. Can we analyze this for what it is? Can we ask ourselves what those demons might be? Can we go into the dark recesses of our minds and pull out the offensive demon and throw it into the stratosphere? Actually, we can.

I have done this many times. Some people do this with prayer, some with yoga, some with exercise, some with meditation, some with medication, some with reading, some with professional therapy, some with sheer willpower.

We each search for ways to deal with our grief, to analyze each phase of our grieving process, to help ourselves to help ourselves. What I have found to be most helpful in analyzing each phase of “demon purging” is the exponential value of talking with others who are also in grief. Asking questions of them will often answer questions of my own. I move forward one step after each Compassionate Friends meeting. It is a difficult step, a tearful,

emotional step, a step that slides sideways and backwards and forwards and then finally settles. But it is the next step on the road of grief. I take that step and its lesson and I apply it for the next month.

The meter of measurement is what I tell myself before I go to sleep each night. Today was good because..... Tomorrow will be good because.....

Where did I learn this technique? I invented it 38 years ago. I invented it for my child. Each night before he fell asleep, we would read a book. Then, we would talk about his day. What was bad? How can you change it? What was good? How did it make you feel? What are you looking forward to tomorrow? Think about that while you fall asleep, I would tell him. Tomorrow will be a good day filled with whatever positive event he had mentioned. He would recite all the good things from his day and everything positive about tomorrow.

Even as teenager and later as an adult, my child and I would have these late night conversations. Our final night conversation was just 6 hours before he died. He was thinking positive, anticipating the good.

So now I continue the tradition. What was good today? What was bad? What am I looking forward to for tomorrow? There is always something positive. I analyze the things that went wrong and “sleep on” a solution.

So this is my stress test –not very complicated-something like a prayer for enlightenment and positive feelings. I discover my yo-yo emotions, my grief, my sadness and yet I remember the happiness and the hope. It helps me to sleep each night. Tomorrow will be better.

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

The Silent Accident

It was terribly cold, even for a January morning in northern New Jersey. Two feet of snow had fallen during the night, leaving the little hamlet where the child and her family lived isolated from the rest of the world.

Area schools were closed. Workers were requested to remain at home unless their jobs were essential to public welfare. Everywhere families were stranded. Since they had just moved into their new home, the child's family was totally unprepared. With practically no food in the house, the decision was made for the child's father and two older sisters to follow the snowplow to the nearest grocery. The child, only five years old, would stay with her mother. She was usually obedient and no one expected her to disobey. But she did.

Slipping on her boots, without bothering with socks, and her coat, the child sneaked out to where her family had parked waiting for the snowplow to complete its task on the next road.

Seeing the child as she crossed the street, the family rolled down the windows and shouted, "Go back, go back!" Only after their screams to go back, only when the child obediently turned to cross the street, only then, when it was too late did they notice another car gliding past them.

Her curly blond hair without a cap, her unbuttoned jacket clasped around her small body, her bare, cold feet covered only by rubber boots, all disappeared from view as the big car pressed forward past the now hushed family car. Twenty feet later the car slid to a halt. The child was gone. Not a sound could be heard.

It was terribly cold and now terribly quiet. The stillness of the moment was broken only by the echoing screams of the child's family. Then quietly, each filled with his own dread, the father, the sisters and the driver left their cars, moving cautiously over the slippery ice to the front of the offending car. Stiffly they inched their way forward,

experiencing such fear that no one could speak. Only one thought was in their minds. "What would they find?"

Tiny red rubber boots lay scattered in opposite directions on the frozen earth; small hands clutched the bumper; large blue eyes were open wide with fright—still no one spoke. After a long moment the tiny child's voice broke the chilling silence with words of wisdom born of five years experience. "I think I did something wrong."

This declaration was followed by muffled cries and tears wiped on cold jacket sleeves, solemn promises made in the hearts of two older sisters, relief that defies description for both the father and the driver.

The child was checked for injuries and then checked again. She was bundled into fresh warm clothes and cuddled in front of the fireplace in her cozy home. Loved more that day than in the weeks before. She had sustained no bruises, no scratches, no breaks. The family and the driver would never forget that terrifying, silent accident. The child would never remember.

There came a time when she would die, this precious child of mine . . . twelve years later, with her father in a small plane crash. I don't know why they died so young and so healthy, anymore than I know why she was spared so many years before.

But I do know that I would endure all the pain again just to have her grace my life. Even now memories of this wondrous child make my heart sing.

Sue Holtkamp

Sue Holtkamp is an author, having written several books including *Grieving with Hope* and *Catherine: in search of something more*. She earned her Ph.D. in 1991 with a focus on traumatic loss and recovery. Founder and director of Something More Bereavement Programs, Sue has served as a consultant to organ and tissue procurement organizations, hospices, funeral homes, and other organizations. She has been a keynote speaker at a past national conference.

From TCF "We Not Walk Alone"

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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 November / December

**Issue of
The Compassionate Friends is
October 15, 2022**

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

3805 Garden Lane, San Diego CA 92106

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September / October 2022

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, 3805 Garden Lane, San Diego CA 92106 (619) 583-1555

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.