



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
2023
Issue 166**

Dedication and Love Gifts 1-2

Mission Statement Meeting Location Telephone Friends 3

Loved, Missed and Remembered 4

Articles 5-10

Websites Steering Committee 11

Next Meetings

In Person And Virtual Meetings See page 3

**Wednesday March 1
Wednesday April 5**

These pages Dedicated with Love to:



Cynthia Lee Kessler



Kristin Elizabeth Hawkinson

♥ Always In Our Hearts ♥



Dee Louise Hochstetler



Ramiro Zuñiga-Cedillo

**San Diego Chapter of TCF
3805 Garden Lane
San Diego CA 92106
(619) 583-1555
www.sdtcf.org**

**Chapter Co-Leaders
John Rooks 619-654-0141
Grace Saputo 619-386-6986**

**The National Office of TCF
48660 Pontiac Trail #930808
Wixom, MI 48393
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 that honor their children in this way.

- ♥ **Gordon R.Collins — In Loving Memory of his daughter Cynthia.**
 - ♥ **Diane & Gary Hochstetler — In Loving Memory of their daughter Dee Louise.**
 - ♥ **Tamara & Siquard Stautland — In Loving Memory of their daughter Kristin.**
 - ♥ **Gloria C. de Zuñiga — In Loving Memory of her son Ramiro.**
-

Bent But Not Broken

The beautiful flowering tree planted in Nina's memory on Memorial Day a year short of a decade ago (by her favorite cousins) looked so regal and smelled so delicious yesterday. I like to think it flowers this time of year as a special birthday message from my "baby girl". However, with the vicious storm we had last evening I watched the soft white petals drift and swirl to the ground, as if a deluge of tears from a breaking heart. Today, it sits almost bare - a few petals still hanging on for dear life, unable to let go, desperate to regain its former beauty.

I can't help but see a symbolism in that tree that I can associate with. It is as if it stands as a monument to my grief, the ebb and flow of emotions that I have felt for the past nine years since Nina no longer walks this earth. When the tree is in full flower it seems much like family life "before". Of course there were short-term crises that now seem insignificant in comparison and life's speed bumps along the way, but all in all, pretty good. I mean, at least our family was intact. When the leaves were suddenly stripped of their branches and thrown to the ground in the furious hailstorm, it was like our lives after Nina's sudden death; thrown suddenly into a world of intense pain and sorrow, trying desperately to survive the unthinkable.

But, yet this morning, the tree stands, more barren and most definitely battered, but still hanging in there. Nine years later, those who love her, have weathered the tornado-like force of grief and loss. And nine years later, much like Nina's tree, though the storm has taken its toll, we will still manage to be upright; definitely bent, but still standing. And somehow, life roars on...

With gentle thoughts,
Cathy L. Seehuetter
TCF St. Paul, MN
In Memory of my daughter, Nina

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 Lisa Hohman
(619) 701-5641

ALCOHOL RELATED Elizabeth Richardson
(619) 245-3515

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

Wednesday in-person meetings at the Legacy Church graciously rented to us. Meetings first Wednesday of the month

Virtual meetings offered. Contact Dominic Montisano: dmontisano@prodigy.net

Legacy Church 8076 La Mesa Blvd. in La Mesa. The Church is within the La Mesa Springs Shopping Center. No food. (7-9 PM)

Directions:

From I-8 going east exit Fletcher Pkwy. Right turn on Baltimore Blvd. Right turn to University Ave. Pass traffic light at Allison Blvd. turning left into "Vons La Mesa Springs" shopping center. Pass Von's entrance continuing to the end of the parking lot, Legacy Church on left. Ample parking.

For another entrance to the "shopping center". Left turn on La Mesa Blvd (next intersection). Left turn next traffic light into the parking lot. Church toward the right.

About TCF and 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 donation is \$30. Donations / Love Gifts are always appreciated.



***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, born 3-13
Michael Lopez, born 3-14
Amy Sara Bowden, born 3-16
Dee Louise Hochstetler, born 3-21
Joseph Roy Elkins, born 3-24
Alexander Joseph Niazi, born 4-8
David Michael Ellis, born 4-11
Matthew Beaver, born 4-13
Lisa Marie Stoefen, born 4-14
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
Kathryn R Main, died 3-8
Cooper Jancic, died 3-9
Julie Hamilton, died 3-12
Ronald Paul Jones, died 3-14
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
Roosevelt Jerard "RJ" Carter, died 4-3
Jasmine Bellofatto, died 4-3
Paul Albert Alferos Jr., died 4-4
Mario De La Rosa, died 4-4
Brian James Gillis, died 4-4
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
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

Transferring Leadership

Like everyone else in the Compassionate Friends, our lives were turned upside down when our son Darryl died on April 9, 1997.

Del has served as Newsletter editor and I, Lisa as Co-leader for many years. We have been honored to serve in memory of our son Darryl.

We thank everyone, especially the committee and our members for all the years of dedication to our chapter and loving support in every way!

John Rooks has kindly volunteered to become chapter leader and Grace Saputo as Co-leader.

This newsletter is my last. I've been at it a number of years. Age has caught up with me causing too many limitations. I thank you all for your support, your contributions and encouragement. Happy to have worked with you. For more information please contact John Rooks at 619.654.0141.

For Such a Time as This

Jean E. Taddonio

how do we bridge
the great valley of sorrow
with a sense of peace
in the middle of grief

there is a place for gratitude
even joy, if we focus
on what we have left
the gift of memories

photos summon tears
as well as smiles
the spirit of love lives on
not as a bridge

but a walk through the valley
embracing the sorrow
that could only arrive
from the birth of joy

and daring to believe
there is more goodness to see
past the shadows
and into the light, for such a time
as this

(Author from following page)



DARCIE SIMS

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS was a bereaved parent, a grief management specialist, a nationally certified thanatologist, a certified pastoral bereavement specialist, and a licensed psychotherapist and hypnotherapist. She was an author of many books on grief and bereavement including *Why Are the Casseroles Always Tuna? Footsteps Through the Valley* and *If I Could Just See Hope*. She was an internationally recognized and popular speaker having keynoted at numerous bereavement conferences nationally and around the world. She served on The Compassionate Friends (TCF) national board of directors and the Association of Death Education and Counseling. Darcie received the TCF Professional Award in 1999. She was president and co-founder of Grief, Inc. and Director of American Grief Academy. She also was Director of Training and Certification for Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). Sadly, Darcie died suddenly and unexpectedly in February of 2014.

LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY

By Darcie Sims

“Why does it hurt so much? Why is this grief so incapacitating? If only the hurt weren’t so crushing.” Sound familiar? All of us have known hurts before, but none of our previous “ouches” can compare with the hurt we now 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 commonly recognized patterns for grief, but even those are only guide-lines. 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 anymore. 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, and to cry. TIME to choke, to scream. TIME to be “crazy” and TIME to remember.

Be nice to yourself! Don't measure your progress 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 their 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 the good memories come over you as easily as the awful ones do. We didn't lose our child...HE/SHE DIED. We didn'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, very glad I loved.

Don't let death cast ugly shadows, but rather warm memories of loving times you shared. Even though death comes, LOVE NEVER GOES AWAY!

(Continued previous page)



I have attended numerous conferences. Even though a couple of decades have passed, I still learn new things each time, look forward to seeing my friends, and each new conference just gets better and better. At the conference, I can spend time with the memories of my daughter. I plan to attend this meaningful conference for years to come.

- TCF Conference Attendee

Registration is open for the 46th TCF National Conference July 7-9, 2023 in Denver!

The Compassionate Friends 46th National Conference will be held July 7-9, 2023, in Denver, Colorado. TCF's annual conference focuses on support for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents, while also offering overall grief support and resources. Our conference is a welcoming place for you if you are grieving a loss or if you want to learn how to better support others who are grieving. It provides valuable support whether you're grieving a recent loss or have been bereaved for a long time. Conference offerings include approximately 100 workshops, keynote speakers, sharing sessions, musical performances and much more!

Strange Bedfellows: Humor and Grief

At the opening ceremony of TCF's National Conference held in Atlanta on July 4, 2003, Maria Housden, author of the marvelous book, *Hannah's Gift*, was the featured speaker. She began by telling how that morning she had conversed with a man she met on the elevator. When he asked her why she was staying in Atlanta she told him that she was there as a speaker for The Compassionate Friends, an organization offering support and hope for parents, siblings and grandparents who had suffered the death of a child. As oftentimes happens when hearing what TCF is, the man suddenly was at a loss for words. As he got off the hotel elevator he broke the silence by turning to Ms. Housden and said, "Well, knock em' dead!"

Of course, the man was mortified after he realized what he had just said; his inadvertent remark was simply a common phrase often used as a send off to someone about to tackle an audience. Unfortunately, not exactly a well-timed or good choice of words considering the situation, but certainly not intentional!

It was easy to tell which people attending the opening ceremony were still quite fresh in their grief and who were the seasoned grievers (those further down the grief road from their child's death) solely by their reaction to Ms. Housden's attention grabbing opening to her speech. As I looked around at the faces of those sitting near me, it was quite obvious who was who. I thought back to my own early grief. I had always considered myself someone with a very good sense of humor, but the days and months following my daughter Nina's death I couldn't imagine finding humor in ANY situation EVER again. I remember witnessing the laughter of strangers and thinking, "Didn't they know my

daughter was dead? Hadn't their world been shattered into a zillion fragments like mine had?"

My first experience with someone trying to mix a little humor with grief was renowned and much loved speaker, Darcie Sims, a grief psychologist. I saw her at a conference for bereaved parents held in Minneapolis barely a year after my daughter's death. I was shocked at how someone could make me laugh out loud and then bring me to tears in almost the same breath. At first I was uncomfortable with my own laughter. But I think it helped that Darcie was herself a bereaved parent and therefore she had "been there" too. Just as I had seen the more seasoned grievers in my TCF group enjoy laughter again, Darcie's humorous, yet poignant speech gave me hope that I would one time too hear the sound of my own laughter and be comfortable with it—something I thought was an impossibility.

There is, of course disgustingly unsuitable "humor" where grief is concerned. I am repeatedly appalled at what I see and hear from the so-called comedians on late-night TV, who seem to find hilarity in the most inappropriate topics: I have heard jokes made about drunk drivers, cancer, suicide, and AIDS with alarming regularity. Obviously, these same "comedians" have never felt the sting of death of someone they loved that was caused by any of the above causes. My oldest daughter is an actor and used to perform for what are called Murder Mystery Dinner Theaters. For example, one of the advertisements read: "Where Murder is Always on the Menu!" She admitted that until her sister Nina died that she didn't really think about how, though seemingly innocent, these shows could be hurtful to those whose loved ones had suffered such an atrocity and how personally painful this mockery of death had become to her after the loss of her little sister.

I know what I, in my early grief, thought about laughter—truthfully, I didn't care if I ever laughed again. I remember a dear friend telling me how she was so tired of hearing from other non-bereaved. "Your daughter wouldn't want you to be so sad. She would want to hear you laugh." To which my friend sternly answered, "No she wouldn't—she would want me to hurt." This was early grief talking. The misconception here is that we oftentimes feel that by laughing, we are somehow dishonoring our children, by appearing as if our renewed interest in enjoyment of life again meant we stopped caring about and loving them. However, we all know deep down that could never be true; we know it is possible to find some humor in unison with the intense forever love of our children, no matter how much we miss them. I know that the aforementioned friend, who is now a "seasoned" griever, would agree. And though you may not be ready to hear it now, eventually, somewhere down the road (remember: there are no timetables in grief – our grief experience is as individual as we are), you will remember a funny story from your child's life and it will feel good to remember it with laughter. And I truly believe your child will smile and laugh along with you.

With gentle thoughts, Cathy L. Seehuetter

TCF St. Paul, MN In Memory of my daughter, Nina

THE BEDROOM DILEMMA

There are many dilemmas affecting the life of a bereaved parent, but one that seems to cause one of the greatest amounts of stress and hand wringing is what we do with our children's (or siblings or grandchild's) bedroom. My daughter Nina's room was her sanctuary--a very messy one at that. Much to my chagrin, the more clutter surrounding her the better! However, as a teenager, that is where she could be found most often; lying on her daybed chatting on the phone with her friends, homework and soda cans scattered around her, clothes and shoes thrown every which way. Laughter emanated from her bedroom, my daughter's intermingled with her friends' shrieks of delight. Many evenings I sat on her bed as she told me of her adventures as a freshman at Park High, her latest crush, and regaled me with her tales of a day in the life of a typical 15-year-old girl. Much of my memories are to be found in that room, and the realization I would never have those experiences again with Nina were almost unbearable. Therefore, what I would do with her bedroom now that she was no longer here was of utmost importance to me.

Over the 12 plus years since Nina left this plane, and I have been a part of TCF sharing groups, I have heard various ways others have dealt with this issue. Interestingly, what seems to come into play again and again is what friends and family thought should be done with the child's room. More often than not, their school of thought is that we should empty it completely, give away their possessions, and change it into an office or guest bedroom just as quickly as possible. They believe keeping things as is are only constant reminders of our children's absence. In reality, we are thinking of them 24/7 anyway.

Truly, they mean well and are only trying to find ways to help us. However, in the early stages of our grief most of us are not capable of making such an important decision, which is one that should be made only by us.

With our loved ones gone, once we change something, there is no going back. To clear away her things and depersonalize her room felt to me as if I was somehow removing her from my life. What I learned from seasoned bereaved parents was that what are perceived as painful memories of their absence, while in early grief, will, in time, become cherished memories we will want to hold onto. When the numbing brain fog lifts we will more clearly begin to realize that, and only then make more rational decisions that are right for our situation.

I decided to leave Nina's room as it was, mostly from advice I received at a TCF meeting. I told myself that I would know when I was ready to tackle that decision. This is not always possible for everyone—maybe they had previously crowded conditions and needed that room for someone else or a variety of other reasons. What we need to remember again is that handling something like this is so personal; what feels right for one person may be entirely wrong for another. I think the key thing to remember is that if we are able to take our time that we try not to make a snap decision. We had no control over the fact that our child died; this might be something that we can make a choice about when we are ready and able to do so.

In my case, I waited for seven years before redoing Nina's room. I tried to do it at one and a half years and then again at five years, and found that I just could not. When I finally did at seven years, I took my time and spent

many weeks sifting through her life. I cried a ton of tears, but at that stage I spent the majority of time smiling and laughing. I found things she wrote, what I call 'buried treasures', that in the early stages would have set me back weeks because of its emotional impact, but years later brought me peace, and a deep personal understanding of Nina's thoughts that rekindled our close relationship.

I acknowledge that most people do not wait seven years to undertake the bedroom project; however, that is what worked for me. I made her room into a guest room that still included her daybed and many of her personal belongings. At that later stage, it became my private place where I would wrap myself in her handmade afghan, lie on her bed, look at the glow-in-the-dark stars on her ceiling (that are still there today), and I felt close to my daughter.

The point here is that seven months or seven years, we must try not to let someone else force the issue, as well meaning as they may be, with something as important as what to do with our child's room. Everyone has different timetables. Only we will know what and when it is right for us.

With gentle thoughts,

Cathy L. Seehuetter

TCF St. Paul, MN

In Memory of my daughter, Nina

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

CHAPTER LEADER John Rooks
619-654-0141

CO-LEADER Grace Saputo
619-386-6986

TREASURER Long Kha
long.kha@gmail.com

SECRETARY Nik Sada
aniksada@yahoo.com

NEWS-LETTER EDITOR Vacant

OUTREACH/ GREETERS Ellen & Bob Hempton
edhempton@gmail.com

VIRTUAL FACILITATORS Debbi & Dom Montisano
(858) 349-5509

LIBRARIAN Nancy Bradbury

SUPPORT:
Lisa Hohman
619-701-5641
Elene Bratton
Yvonne & Lucien Bennett-Niang
ybennettniang@yahoo.com

South California Regional
Coordinator
John Rooks

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

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



Regular issues of this newsletter are discontinued.

More information may be forthcoming from John Rooks' Office
castlejar@att.net

Web Master Jason Kha
webmaster@sdtcf.org

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.



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supporting Family After a Child Dies
San Diego County Chapter

3805 Garden Lane, San Diego CA 92106

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March / April 2023

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.